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A TREATISE ON BAPTISM.

THE WORKS

OF

THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

VOL. X.

A TREATISE ON BAPTISM.

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
285 BROADWAY.
1855.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD ASHLEY,

M.P. FOR THE COUNTY OF DORSET,

IN GRATEFUL TESTIMONY OF HIS LABOURS

FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FACTORY CHILDREN,

FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

BY THE STATE,

AND FOR THE UNIMPAIRED CONTINUANCE

OF OUR PROTESTANT INSTITUTIONS;

AS WELL AS OF HIS EFFORTS TO COMMUNICATE

OUR HIGHEST BLESSINGS TO OTHERS,

AND ESPECIALLY TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL;

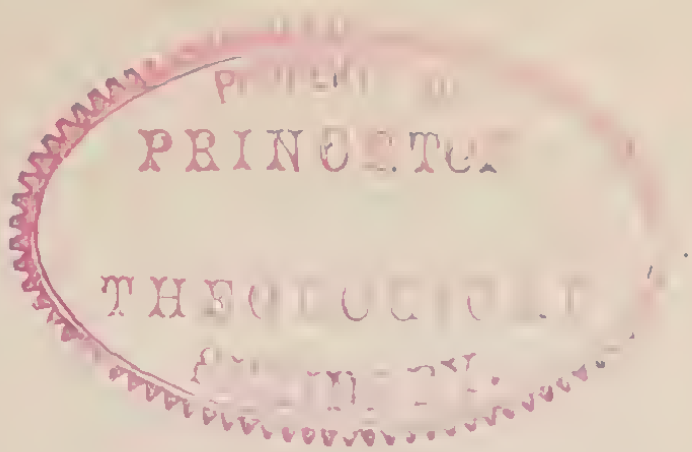
AND WITH HEARTY PRAYERS FOR HIS SPIRITUAL

AND ETERNAL WELFARE,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

Watton Rectory,
January 1, 1840.



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PREFACE.

The object of the author in this Treatise on Baptism has been the edification of Christians. It was not so much his design to maintain and defend controversially even what he has stated and believes to be God's truth on this interesting ordinance, as to lead his readers to the use and great practical benefit connected with a right reception of it. He could not indeed attain this without showing the grounds on which he held the truths thus practically set before the reader; but his object has been, not the full maintenance of particular opinions, but the practical and spiritual profit of the reader, in the believing view of truths which the author considers to be plainly revealed in God's word, and which have been generally believed by the church of Christ.

This treatise completes a series of works commenced in 1815, to promote the practical improvement of THE MEANS OF GRACE, for the success of which the author cannot be too grateful to the Father of mercies. He first published his SCRIPTURE HELP, then his TREATISE ON PRAYER, then that on the LORD'S SUPPER. His CHRISTIAN HEARER was published next, then his CHRISTIAN STUDENT, and

the series is now closed with this TREATISE ON BAPTISM. The kindness with which the Christian church has received treatises, published amidst incessant occupations which only allowed hurried and often distant intervals of leisure for their preparation, has led him on till he has completed his purposes on this subject. The good Lord pardon all defects, and accept the attempt to promote the spiritual welfare of his people.*

* Our older divines felt very strongly the great importance of a diligent attendance on all THE MEANS OF GRACE. The condensed and practical instruction of the following pithy sentences of Dr. John White (who flourished at the end of Elizabeth's and the beginning of James's reign) will be useful, notwithstanding its occasional quaintness and want of fulness in evangelical motive, and will shew how earnestly they pressed this. It is a postscript of a letter to a friend.

"Let him that will live reposedly and die cheerfully—hear, pray, meditate, do. *First.* HEAR God's word in the scriptures and in the pulpit; in the scriptures daily, in the pulpit make choice of a fit teacher, and stick to him; for the practice of God's word gives knowledge, works holiness, breaks down natural corruption, and fills with strength and comfort against all assaults. *Secondly.* PRAYER has three rules: daily without intermission; free, that the mind be unladen; go to prayer as you go into the water to swim, take a time first, go not hot in, but cool yourself, feeling that the words touch your soul. The day that I neglect either God's word or prayer is unhappy. That God being so near and within me, I should neither speak to him nor he to me,—that were too much between a man and his wife. *Thirdly.* MEDITATION is the most sovereign cure of the soul that is. My course is this: I miss no day, but I retire myself, if I be at home, to my study or the field, and there I first pray to God to give me a recollected mind; secondly, I enter into consideration of my sinful state, and examine myself, I call for help to God; thirdly, I take notice of my passion, disposition, and inclination, and so I come to the knowledge of myself; fourthly, I arm myself by vows, resolutions, and prayer to conquer myself as a city; fifthly, I call to mind if anything has passed between my neighbour (any other) and me: if I remember any unkindness offered or received, I wash it out, I clear the score, I suffer no man's infirmity to possess me with conceit; sixthly, I inquire after the day of my death in this sort: I set it before my eye, I examine whether I be fit, prepared, ready, willing to die; my cowardly soul I encourage and teach it to look death in the face; I end this point with flying to my Saviour for help, till I become more than a conqueror. I will with great and tender passion in this point pour out myself and my weakness to him. Seventhly, I think also of my worldly state, and if it prosper I give thanks and lay humility and compassion in my mind; if I be poor, I pray for supply, and bethink me of some honest and lawful means, and here I remember wife,

National circumstances make it now more than ever requisite for the ministers of Christ to bring forward the nature and duty of Christian baptism. This blessed ordinance has by recent legislative measures ceased to be requisite for the enrolment of our names in the national registry of British subjects. I have been informed that in one large town the number of baptisms has considerably decreased since the Registration Act came into operation. Even should this be generally the case, may the church of Christ only the more prize it and use it, and thus more than recover its true national standing.

The subject of baptismal regeneration has in various periods engaged the attention of the church, and in our own times has been again and again the occasion of controversy. The views which the author has here given are substantially those which he many years since stated in his Christian Student. Many of the differences among Christians, as Mr. Bosanquet has shown in his valuable work, "A New System of Logic," arise from the inadequacy and ambiguity of all language.* But collateral benefits have arisen from this controversy, and especially I

children, servants, and purpose to bring them towards God. *Fourthly.* DOING is the life of all, for it is nothing to be religious in ceremonies. Here are four principal points. First, beware of doing against your conscience. Secondly, omit no occasion, place, or time, or person if you can do good. Thirdly, follow the good of your own calling; too many meddle with the good that belongs to others to do, as Uzzah. Fourthly, the best good in the world is compassion and alms, and comforting in distress, as sickness, &c. Life is short, the days are evil, our company is small, the account is certain, the comfort is unutterable."

* It is pleasant to see such writers as our lay brethren, Bosanquet and Abercrombie, and many others, redeeming fresh fields of thought from that wilderness in which the absence of Christianity has left them, and making them, through the truths of the gospel, abundant in fruits of blessing. May we not hope that this will more and more be the case, till every science, recovered by Christianity to its highest use, yields its richest stores for the glory of God and the good of man.

trust there will be the setting forth, in a clear and fuller light, the true use of baptism, and the nature and indispensable necessity of the saving regeneration of the Spirit.

There is a depth of hidden wisdom and love in all the divine appointments which we can at present but very partially discern. The two sacraments are full of this heavenly wisdom. The past history of the church has already disclosed this in part. The outward sacraments from age to age, amidst the shifting scenes of this world and the ever-varying opinions of fallible men, and the innumerable heresies that have troubled the church, have greatly helped to preserve to us the great vital and inward truths, on the due reception of which, and on our constantly being influenced by them, our holiness and eternal blessedness so much depend. Dr. Waterland has shewn this very distinctly in his charge delivered about a century since to the clergy of Middlesex. They are standing monuments of the truth of Christianity against Atheists, Deists, Jews, Turks, Pagans, and all kinds of infidels, bearing date and continuing in visible and open observance, from the days of our Lord ; being abiding memorials of the great facts of our religion. It will be seen in this Treatise, how Baptism bears witness to the great truths of the gospel, p. 68—70. Dr. Waterland also observes, " When the Praxeans, Noetians, and Sabellians of the second and third centuries presumed to innovate in the doctrine of the Trinity, by reducing the three persons of the Godhead to one, then the sacrament of baptism remarkably manifested its doctrinal force to the confusion of these misbelievers. There was no resisting the pointed language of the sacramental form, which ran distinctly in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. When the *Arians* of the fourth century took upon them to deprave the doctrine of

the Trinity in an opposite extreme, by rejecting the deity of our Saviour Christ, "who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 6), then again the same baptism reclaimed against novelty, and convicted the misbelievers in the face of the world. It was obvious to every impartial and considering man, that the form of baptism ran equally in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that it could never be intended to initiate Christ's disciples in the belief and worship of God and two creatures. The Eunomians set aside the scripture form. About the year 366 rose up the sect of the "Macedonians," impugners of the divinity of the Holy Ghost. By the sacrament of Baptism, a lasting monument of the true divinity of the Third Person as well as of the Second, the generality of Christians were confirmed in the ancient faith, and preserved from falling into the snares of the seducers. About 410, "Pelagius" opposed the church's doctrine of original sin; but the sacrament of the baptism of infants for the remission of sins, had weight sufficient to bear down all the abstracted subtleties and laboured refinements of Pelagius and his associates, and proved one of the strongest securities to the Christian faith. In the sixteenth century, "Faustus Socinus" revived (perhaps ignorantly) the ancient Sabellianism, Photinianism, and Pelagianism, with other exploded heresies. He discarded Baptism as needless, and reduced the Eucharist to a bare commemoration of an absent friend. These sacraments directly withstand his heresies. Baptism is a standing monument of the personality and equal divinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the Lord's Supper is an abiding memorial of the merits (though no creature can merit) of our Lord's obedience and sufferings: and both together were lasting attestations, all the way from the very infancy of the church, of the secret workings, the

heavenly graces and influences of the Holy Spirit upon the faithful receivers."

These excellent observations of Dr. Waterland might be enlarged by mentioning farther great truths maintained and confirmed through the sacrament of Baptism, as he also shews how the Eucharist preserved the church from other heresies, and established other peculiar and vital doctrines of the gospel of Christ. Let us be led by these considerations to a more full and entire confidence in the Lord, and a more diligent, believing, and practical observance of every direction of our God, though at the time we may little discern its full meaning and importance.

Those who wish to see a full detail of many ancient practices in baptism may consult Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xi.; or on a still fuller scale, "Martene de Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus." A variety of superstitions were soon mingled with the simplicity of the scriptural ordinances, and it is painful to read the lengthened details of them, with so little of God's revealed truth, in its simple power, purity, and majesty.

Amidst all the evils of these times, and even by them, we may entertain the hope that the true church is more rising to discern the spiritual glory and the real blessedness of all God's ordinances, and using them more and more in the spirit of faith, hope, and love. By the far more general practice of the public administration of baptism, this delightful sacrament of God's first grace and love to us sinners, is again vividly brought out before the church in its true value and blessedness. It becomes a help in the ministry, a means of the revival of family piety, and a mighty aid to assist parents in making their families the nurseries of the Church of Christ.

The author has read many of the controversial treatises

on baptism, and few without some profit; though there is a mistiness and a haziness over some, that tends very greatly to obscure the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and the clear air of his own Spirit. Let the Father's love be displayed; let Jesus be glorified; let his Spirit be honoured and set forth;—thus only can we enter into the blessedness of being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

If, Christian reader, you derive any benefit from this, or any of the author's other writings, give to your Heavenly Father all the praise, and pray for the writer that he may be upheld to the end, and be enabled ever to seek the glory of God, in the salvation and spiritual welfare of our fellow-men.

E. BICKERSTETH.

Watton Rectory,
Jan 1. 1840.

PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

TREATISE ON BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE BAPTISMS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The restoration of his fallen creatures to the favour and the presence, to the image and the enjoyment of their glorious Creator, is the great and gracious design of our God, in all his varied dispensations, as well as in the full light and enlarged grace of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The present condition of the human race is most affecting and awful. Sin has separated weak and dependent creatures, with ten thousand thousand capacities of misery or enjoyment, from communion with their Creator, the only sure protector from evil, the only source of all good and all joy. Since men have sinned against him, they live as "without God in the world." He is their terror, and not their refuge; their hatred, and not their delight. They fly from him, being alienated and at enmity, and dread each manifestation of his presence and power. But God has boundless pity and unsearchable riches of mercy. He has revealed in his word his loving-kindness towards sinners, and has manifested his grace in Christ Jesus to the guilty nations of the earth, calling all men now to be reconciled, and return back to him from whom they have revolted. He has shewn that he means nothing less for us, as the

result of his infinite wisdom, righteousness, and goodness, than to bring us, through the mediation of his only-begotten Son, and the gifts of his free Spirit, to his own happy and everlasting kingdom, when to us also, sinful as we have been, "God shall be all in all."

Who can tell all the goodness and loving-kindness of our God in giving such various means as he has provided, for our recovery from our iniquities, and our renewed communion with him, and our full restoration to holiness and happiness? This great result has from the beginning been in the mind of Him who "has commended his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Innumerable are the witnesses in creation and providence, of his doing good to men, giving them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness.

In his WORD, we see still more distinctly that full provision has been made for testifying visibly and constantly his love to man. Sacrifices were from the beginning appointed for this end; the rainbow was made the token of a covenant of peace; circumcision was given to the father of the faithful; the minute and comprehensive law of Moses was, throughout, full of proofs that God would have all Israel restored to holiness and communion with him.

The various parts of the Old Testament dispensation were introductory to the more simple, spiritual, and general worship of our God. The good tidings of great joy revealed in Christ are for all people, and designed to be made known to all nations, and to shew God's love to all men, and his full purpose finally to bless our whole earth with the knowledge of his salvation. The instructive histories of the Old Testament give us, however, continual types of spiritual blessings; and the ceremonies of the law, or the necessities of our condition in this world, prepared the way for the simple rites and sacraments of the gospel.

Many parts of the Old Testament are in the New thus applied to the sacrament of BAPTISM—one of those two distinguished sacred mysteries of God's grace and love which he has given for our instruction and salvation, and

which it is the object of the present treatise to illustrate, if it shall please God to bless this effort for the edification of the reader. For the more clear and full comprehension of that sacrament, we will first notice these preparations of the Old Testament for the baptism of the gospel.

That great and awful event THE DELUGE, is the first illustration in the Old Testament which we have of the baptism of the New Testament. God, in the destruction of the whole world of sinners, and the salvation of one family in the midst of that destruction, thus gave, from the beginning, a type and emblem of his purposes of love to our fallen race, as well as of his righteous and most awful wrath against all sin. "When the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water, the like figure whereunto even baptism doth now also save us." We see here the waters of the flood made the means of separation between the church and the world; while those waters were the means of destruction to the world, they were the means of bearing the church of God, in the ark, above that destruction. Thus admission by baptism into the church of Christ is God's appointed ordinance, as admission into the ark was; and hence our means of salvation; while its wilful rejection, and turning to creature confidence, will leave men exposed to condemnation and wrath. Yet, as in the outward deliverance by the ark, there was one at least left under the sentence of a curse through his persevering wickedness, so the privileges of Christian baptism are connected with a curse on such as profane, in their evil conduct afterwards, that divine ordinance. And as the flood was to those saved through it, the beginning of a new life and a new world, of which they were the heirs, so is baptism to Christians the introduction by faith and in spirit to a new world of which they are called to be the heirs. We may view the ark as typical of the Church of Christ, and Noah, the builder of the ark, as the figure of our Lord Christ, who institutes all the ordinances of the Christian church. In this first great

type, then, what a solemn lesson we have of the vast importance of Christian baptism, and its connection with our safety from that wrath to come which shall overtake assuredly the ungodly.

It has been supposed, that from the time of the deluge washings with water were used as typical of cleansing from wickedness; and that Jacob's direction "to his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange Gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments," has a reference to this spiritual washing.

A second striking lesson of baptism is given us in THE PASSAGE OF THE ISRAELITES THROUGH THE RED SEA. "Brethren," says the Apostle, "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Under the conduct of their leader, Moses, in their passage from Egypt to Canaan, the Israelites were brought to the Red Sea. It was the way by which they were to pass out of Egypt into the wilderness that lay between them and Canaan. So we Christians, under the conduct of Christ, our leader, are brought to baptism, as a first step in our passage from this evil world, and a first great change introducing us to the experience of the Christian life. When the Israelites were brought to the Red Sea, they seemed to be brought to death rather than to life; yet the waves were opened before them, and through those very waves, roaring all around them, (Isa. li. 15.) and sprinkling them with spray through the mighty east wind, (Exod. xiv. 21.) they were to be brought to the promised land; while the Egyptians were indeed irretrievably overwhelmed in that sea. Thus when we are brought to baptism, it is to be baptized into the death of Jesus, to have fellowship with his sufferings, and yet that apparent death is the very passage to victory over our enemies, and to spiritual life and final glory. Both fathers and children passed under the cloud and through the sea; the baptism was common to both, and in this it corresponds to the enlarged commission of Christ to disciple all nations

and baptize them. All this national baptism was in great mercy: "He made Israel to pass through the Red Sea, for his mercy endureth for ever." It was a pledge and token of his covenant love to them, to call forth, strengthen, and increase their faith. "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Their obtaining the blessing was connected with faith and obedience. Their entrance into the land, and their glory there, was still dependant on their acting out God's gracious promises. Faith was still requisite to make the real blessings effectively theirs. To those who believed, like Caleb and Joshua, the promises were fully realized. Those who believed not, entered not in, because of their unbelief. In all this we may learn the exact character and meaning of Christian baptism.

The people were prepared for the reception of the law by washing. "Moses went down from the mount to the people, and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes." Exod. xix. 14.

We have a farther instruction in baptism in THE WASHING APPOINTED BY THE LAW OF MOSES. Aaron and his sons, on their being consecrated to the priesthood, were to be WHOLLY washed with water, as well as sprinkled with blood, at the door of the tabernacle, Exod. xxix. 4. 21. And whenever they went into the tabernacle, they were to wash their hands and their feet at the brazen laver. Exod. xxx. 18—21. For cleansing from various ceremonial uncleannesses also the Israelites were directed to wash themselves, (Lev. xiii. 54, 58: xiv. 8, 9; xvi. 4, 24; xxii. 6,) and this was made of such importance, that on washing he was counted clean; but if he washed not, "then he shall bear his iniquity," Lev. xvii. 15, 16. For the cleansing of the Levites, the Lord gave this direction to Moses, Num. viii. 7. "Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let

them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean." These things are called by the Apostle "divers washings or baptisms—a figure for the time then present, imposed upon them until the time of the reformation," Heb. ix. 9, 10. It is not clear that the law required the priests or ministers of the sanctuary ever to cleanse the unclean otherwise than by sprinkling, or pouring of water and washing. The general nature and meaning of such washings were obvious ; they pointed out spiritual uncleanness, our sinfulness before God, and the need of spiritual cleansing to be accepted in his sight. Christians are "a royal priesthood ;" they have an initiatory washing, the ordinance of baptism, to consecrate them to their high and holy office, and they need the frequent renewings of the Holy Ghost to be cleansed from their sins. It is to be observed, that the priests' whole body was washed at their first institution as priests for the service of the sanctuary (Exod. xxix. 4) ; but afterwards they were only required to wash their hands and their feet, Exod. xxx. 18—21. The Apostle similarly distinguishes the Christian's life into the commencing regeneration, and the daily renewing : "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Throughout the prophets we observe a frequent connection between the washing of the body with water and the cleansing of the soul from sin, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Psalm li. 2. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings." Isaiah i. 16. "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." Jer. iv. 14. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean." Ezek. xxxvi. 25. These and similar passages (Zech. xiii. 1. Isaiah lii. 15.) point out how fully the Jewish church was prepared to recognize a baptism with

water, as naturally figurative and expressive of the cleansing of the soul from its sinfulness.

There is a farther practice noticed in the Old Testament, at THE BIRTH OF AN INFANT, which is common to the humbling circumstances in which, in all countries, human beings are first brought into the world, that will yet farther illustrate baptism. The commencement of the Jewish nation is thus compared to the birth of an infant—"As for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee, thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. When I passed by thee, polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood—Live, (and it is repeated because of the delightful truth the words contain) yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood—Live. Thou wast naked and bare. Now, when I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, (there is the first beginning of all our hopes and blessings,) and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine; yea, I washed thee with water, I thoroughly washed thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil." The prophet goes on to describe fully the many favours then bestowed on that helpless infant. We may hence gather the designed analogy of Christian baptism. From the absolute bodily wants of a new-born babe, we are taught the spiritual wants of the soul; from that which the new-born babe requires to be done for its preservation and health, we are led onwards by baptism to consider that blessings are requisite for the soul at its spiritual birth for its preservation of health. In the words of the christian father Jerome, "As the bodies of infants polluted with blood need to be washed as soon as they come from their mother's womb, so our spiritual birth needs this salutary washing." And yet the very passage shews how all this may only increase, through abuse, our guilt and condemnation. Judah fell,

and the reason is given ; it is said to her, "Because thou didst trust in thine own beauty."

From these few observations the Christian reader may see how large a preparation was made, even in the Old Testament, for the baptismal ordinance under the New, and how carefully the Divine Spirit had ordered all that had previously taken place to give his full instruction concerning it, and to secure, as it were for our use, the blessings which God intended in his love to convey to us, and yet to guard us against the perverse abuse of that love and the turning of his grace into licentiousness.

CHAPTER II.

THE APPOINTMENT OF BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The covenant which separated Abraham and his posterity from the nations of the earth, then falling into idolatry, to be the people of God, was a glorious manifestation of God's special grace to an elect people. Yet we find in the very first call of Abraham, abundant proof of God's love to all men. The words "I will bless thee and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," (Gen. xii. 3, 4.) form part of that covenant. The same overflowing love of God is continually manifesting itself through the various dispensations of Israel to the coming of our Lord. We see indeed an election of grace, but it is with the assurance that "God regardeth not persons, and loveth the stranger." Deut. x. 17, 18. That "the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy," (Rom. xv. 9.) was, as the apostle shews, ever in the divine mind.

When Christ himself appeared, it became still more clear that he was "the Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Saviour of the world." (Luke ii. 32. John vi. 42.)

This glorious truth became yet more manifest by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." As all things were created by Christ, and for Christ, so has he redeemed the world to himself by his death. "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their

trespasses unto them." In the strong words of Luther; after speaking of Christ as the greatest transgressor that was or would be in the world, he goes on, "For he being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person and without sin,—is not now the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary; but a sinner which has, and carries, the sin of Paul, who was a blasphemer, an oppressor, and a persecutor; of Peter, who denied Christ; of David, who was an adulterer, a murderer, and caused the Gentiles to blaspheme the name of the Lord; and, briefly, who has, and bears all the sins of all men in his body, not that he himself committed them, but, being committed or done by us, he received them, and laid them on his own body, that he might make satisfaction for them with his own blood. Isaiah liii. Matt. viii. 17. By this means the whole world is purged and cleansed from all sins, and so delivered from death and all evils. Now sin being vanquished, and death abolished by this one man. God would see nothing else in the whole world, if it did believe, but a mere cleansing and righteousness. And if any remnants of sin should remain, yet for the great glory that is in Christ, God would wink at them and would not see them." *

O wondrous plan of mercy! by the death of Jesus, sin is condemned: by his resurrection, the most sinful, believing in him, are freely justified. Thus all men may look upon their own sins with detestation and abhorrence, and upon Christ's righteousness as their own righteousness now and for ever; may know that this is the only right state for sinful man, and a standing which every human being is called to take.

According with this full exhibition of God's love, baptism was appointed to bring all nations visibly and manifestly under this covenant of grace, to give them solid ground for their faith, both in the word and in the sacrament, and admit them to be members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaveu.

* See his Comment on Gal. iii. 13.

Great and wonderful is both the holiness and the loving-kindness of God in our free salvation, by Christ Jesus. In the words of that noble champion of the doctrine of grace, Martin Luther, "Christ has already saved us; he has performed all things which are required hereunto, that we may be saved; has overcome and subdued sin, death, hell, &c., so that he has left nothing for any man to care for; HE HAS ALSO GIVEN ALL THESE THINGS TO US IN BAPTISM, that whosoever believes in Christ, has performed them, has them together in the same moment, HE HAS NEED OF NOTHING MORE UNTO SALVATION BUT FAITH ALONE, that he may firmly believe that these things are so performed. But mark what incomparable riches of his grace God has poured upon us in baptism, who has delivered us even from those works whereby those holy foolish ones go about to merit heaven and to be saved; for we must have heaven and be saved before we can do any good works; so that works cannot merit heaven, but heaven being before given of mere grace, causes us to do good works, and that not for the hope of merit or reward, but only to the profit of our neighbours and to the glory of God, until this body be delivered from sin and death. Wherefore all the life of a Christian after baptism is nothing else but an expectation of salvation and felicity to be revealed, which they that believe in Christ do now possess although hidden. 1 John iii. 1—3." (*Sermon on Titus* iii. 4—7.)

Luther, in speaking afterwards of a true and right faith, thus describes it: 'First, that thou doubt not that God is become to thee a merciful Father, who hast pardoned all thy sins, and in baptism adopted thee for his son and heir, that thou mayest certainly know that thou art saved; again, thou must also know this, that this was not done gratuitously, neither without satisfaction made to the divine justice; for there can be no place in thee for the divine grace and mercy to work salvation and to give thee eternal good things, unless the justice of God were before most fully satisfied.' Matt. v. 18.

That we may the more clearly see this large design of God's love, let us proceed to consider the appointment of baptism by our Lord.

There were many PREPARATORY steps before the Lord Jesus Christ finally appointed Christian baptism. The title of his forerunner, John, was eminently THE BAPTIST, and our Lord, referring to him, says : "This is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, among them which are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

Let us first consider THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

The ministry of John was emphatically to "prepare the way of the Lord," and his preaching was "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;" having also to set before men this designed issue of God's love, that every obstacle should, in the result, be removed, "and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." His instruction was, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and his baptism was connected with the confession of sin. "They were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

This ministry excited a general expectation among the Jews. Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to John preaching in the wilderness, and "were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." He gave to each class appropriate instruction, teaching them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. But his great office was to point out the coming Saviour. "As the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John whether he were the Christ, or not, John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose ; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Luke iii. 15, 16.

It does not appear that John the Baptist baptized disciples into any particular name. The Jewish dispensation was

still subsisting, and his ministry appears to have been supplementary to that dispensation, rather than the commencement of the Christian. Indeed the great truths connected with the death of our Lord so form the whole foundation both of Christian Baptism and of Christianity, that till his crucifixion and resurrection, the new dispensation could not be fully opened and proclaimed.

But had the Jews received John's testimony to our Lord, instead of rejecting it, as they did, how different would have been the result to the Jewish nation! The balance for a moment seemed favourable. "He was the burning and shining light, (ὁ λυχνος ὁ καιομενος) and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in that light;" but when it came to the spirituality and humiliation of the gospel, and our Lord appealed to them,—"The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" they took shelter in that common subterfuge of a wicked mind, pretending uncertainty, and replied, "We cannot tell." Our Lord had warned them of the immensely important issue of receiving John's testimony, when he told them, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was to come." (Matt. xi. 14;) But they rejected him, and for eighteen hundred years have thus thrown back the kingdom of glory, till "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things." Matt. xvii. 11.

Their sin was the more wilful and their guilt the more inexcusable, as John referred them from his outward baptism to the inward baptism, (Luke iii. 16, 17,) pointed to Christ only for the remission of sins, (John i. 29;) and explicitly warned them against trusting in a mere formal baptism, Luke iii. 7—14.

Jesus himself also came, and submitted himself to John's baptism. Though without sin, yet bearing our sins, he refused not the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, but was baptized in the river Jordan, and was then acknowledged to the eyes of men by the visible descent of the Spirit, and to the ears of men by the audible voice of God, as "the beloved Son of God," in "whom" his Fa-

ther was " well pleased." He was afterwards again and again explicitly pointed out to the people by John the Baptist, while he said to them, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John i. 29, 36.

Our Lord's yielding himself to be baptized by John is full of instruction. The Baptist, sensible indeed of his true glory and freedom from all sin, " forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me." But the whole life of Jesus was a life of self-sacrifice and humiliation, and he would therefore yield himself to be baptized by his own messenger and forerunner. " Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And so he was baptised of John.

The Baptism of our Lord was a connecting link between the ordinances of the Old and of the New Testament.

Our Divine Redeemer, who was under the law for us, and fulfilled all righteousness for our redemption, submitted himself both to circumcision and baptism, thus sympathising with his saints who lived before, as well as those who lived after, his coming. Archbishop Ussher, in his tract entitled ' Immanuel,' remarks thus on this part of our Lord's conduct :—' Howsoever circumcision was by right applicable only unto such as were dead in sins and the uncircumcision of their flesh, (Col. ii. 11, 13 ;) yet he in whom there was no body of the sins of the flesh to be put off, submitted himself notwithstanding thereunto ; not only to testify his communion with the fathers of the Old Testament, but also by this means to tender unto his Father a bond signed with his own blood, whereby he made himself in our behalf " a debtor unto the whole law,' " Gal. v. 3.

In like manner *Baptism* appertained properly unto such as were defiled and had need to have their sins washed away : and therefore when all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem went out unto John, they were all baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Matt.

iii. 6. Among the rest came our Saviour also: but the Baptist considering that he had need to be baptized by Christ, and Christ no need to be baptized by him, refused to give way unto that action, as altogether unbefitting the state of that immaculate Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. Yet did our Mediator submit himself to that ordinance of God also, not only to testify his communion with the Christians of the New Testament, but especially,—which is the reason yielded by himself,—because it became him thus "to fulfil all righteousness." Matt. iii. 15.

After his own baptism we see a further preparatory step. He went up to the passover at Jerusalem, and wrought miracles there; and Nicodemus, struck by these miracles, came to him by night for instruction. In that instruction our Lord appears to open to him the real significance of baptism in the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The great character of John's baptism was a baptism with water, confessing sins, and unto repentance; the great character of Christian baptism was a baptism with water indeed outwardly; but as to its real significance and glory, a baptism with the Holy Ghost, setting forth the washing away of all our sins, and producing a death unto sin and a new birth from above unto righteousness. Let the reader notice how frequently the baptisms of John and our Lord are thus contrasted. (Matt. iii. 6—16. Mark i. 8, 9. Luke iii. 16. John i. 25—33. Acts i. 5; ii. 38; xi. 16.)

Further preparatory steps were taken in the BAPTISMS BY OUR LORD AND HIS DISCIPLES before his crucifixion. Immediately after the discourse with Nicodemus, we read, "Jesus and his disciples came into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized." The beautiful spirit of John is then noticed, as rejoicing in the growing work of the Redeemer. "He that hath the Bride,

is the Bridegroom, but the friend of the Bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice ; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

But in what light are we to regard this baptism by our Lord and his disciples ? It does not appear to be the commencement of Christian baptism, but the continued preparation for the new dispensation of the gospel. Many as had been baptized by John, more still were baptized under our Lord's directions, (John iv. 1.) " And though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples " (v. 2.), yet was it a part of that lowliness and humiliation which marked all his steps to the very last, that he appears here to be subservient, if we may say so, to John's administration of baptism, and rejoicing to carry on that work of repentance which John had commenced. Hence we find him using the very same form of instruction which John had previously used, " Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Compare Matt. iii. 2. and iv. 17.) His not baptizing himself might, as in the case of the apostle Paul (1 Cor. i. 14.), be to guard against that excessive overvaluing of outward ordinances by which the Christian church so soon fell away from the simplicity of the gospel.

One more preparation for Christian baptism before its actual appointment, recorded only by that divine evangelist (whose gospel is so simply full of heavenly things, that he only of the four evangelists omits the external sacraments, that he may give the glory of their spiritual import more clearly and brightly,) may explain yet farther our Lord's design in baptism, I mean, OUR LORD'S WASHING THE FEET OF HIS DISCIPLES at his last supper with them.* " He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Peter, with his usual ardent spirit, objects to this. Our

* The expression, (John xiii. 2.) *Supper being ended*, should rather be, *supper being come*, or ready, γενομενου.

Lord tells him he shall know the reason afterwards. Peter still objects, till Jesus answers, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." On hearing this, Peter's ardent love takes a directly opposite direction, and he says, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all." In this he points out the spiritual meaning of what he had done, as intended to shew to them the need of spiritual cleansing by the Lord himself, and yet that his own appointment might, through the wickedness of the receiver, (as in the case of Judas,) utterly fail of a blessing, and only aggravate the guilt of the partaker. Oh affecting thought! that Jesus should stoop to wash the very feet of his betrayer, and yet that it should only harden where it ought to have melted and subdued. And yet, equally affecting thought! that so many should be washed in his name, and yet only harden themselves in rebellion against him.

Thus was the way prepared for the Christian ordinance of baptism. By typical histories and institutions, by that which is natural on the birth of every child born into our world, by the washings of repentance connected with John the Baptist's ministry, and the washing of the feet of his disciples before their supper, the church of God was prepared for the due understanding of this sacred institution.

Let us now proceed to its APPOINTMENT BY OUR LORD.

Just before he left the scene of his humiliation, and ascended to his original glory, having purchased eternal redemption for us, he gave his last directions, inclusive of this ordinance. If the Lord's Supper be specially interesting, as founded on his last command before he suffered, baptism is also specially interesting, as contained in his last charge before he ascended and returned back again to his heavenly mansion, carrying with him there our nature, and wearing there our very form in the presence of God and all his angels.

The direction appears to have been given on two occa-

sions. The more full statement with which St. Matthew closes his gospel, which some have thought was given on Mount Tabor in Galilee, is as follows : " All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach (μαθητευσατε, train up as disciples) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching (διδασκοντες, instructing) them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Oh ! full and blessed conclusion of our Lord's eventful history, shewing his large designs of love to the whole human race !

The conclusion of St. Mark's gospel contains our Lord's address, probably given on another occasion, and, as has been thought, at Bethany, on his ascension. It is : " Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature : he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. He connects with this direction the promise of power to work miracles, a power actually realized by those to whom the promise was first given : " the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with signs following."

This all-important and last commission given by our Lord to his disciples is the foundation of the Christian ministry, the sum of Christian doctrine, the commencement of the visible church, the grand means and charter for its propagation through the world, the rule for Christian obedience, and the cheering stay and hope of the church in the spiritual presence of its Head, while he is as to his bodily presence absent. It enlarges the church of God from a confined country, and sends it through the earth on its glorious message of grace and love to all men : and it continues this its blessed office to the final consummation of all things.

In the baptism appointed by our Lord, there is a more distinct exhibition for the forgiveness of sins. John's was the baptism " of confession of sin." (Matt. iii. 6.) and " of repentance for the remission of sins." The baptism ap-

pointed by Christ pointed out rather sins already washed away by his blood. Hence the charge is, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sin." Acts ii. 38. The great fact of the "putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Christ," was now fully accomplished, and men were freely invited to partake of the blessing, and have it assured to them by baptism.

The OBLIGATION under which all Christians are to observe the rite of baptism, is what may be hence first deduced. This obligation may be seen on various grounds.*

1. THE COMMAND IS DECISIVE. Disciple and baptize all nations. The word is unequivocal as to the real application of the element of water, when it is connected with the previous practice of John the Baptist and of our Lord's disciples. The Jews could not mistake its meaning. The practice of, in many respects, a truly valuable body of Christians, who, under the idea of peculiarly maintaining the spirituality of the gospel, omit the external ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, has no foundation in the word of God, or in a just view of the real character and necessities of man as composed of body and spirit, and requiring the visible and outward to quicken him to the

* Archbishop Whitgift, in his reply to Cartwright, on the necessity of baptism, though the necessity of salvation be not tied to the sacrament, speaks thus—

"The outward sacramental signs are seals of God's promises, and whosoever REFUSETH the same shall never enjoy the promises; and although the necessity of salvation is not so tied to the sacraments, that whosoever hath the external signs shall therefore be saved, yet it is so tied to them, that none can he saved that *willingly* and *wittingly* is void of them, and not partakers of them. Circumcision, which is a figure of baptism, had that necessity joined unto it, that whosoever lacked it, was not counted or reckoned among the people of God. It is not nothing that Christ saith: 'Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit,' &c. But your manner of doctrine is such, that it maketh men think that the external signs of the sacraments are bare ceremonies, and in no wise necessary to salvation, which must in time bring in a contempt of the sacraments, and especially of baptism for infants."

"M. Zuinglius, Bucer, and Calvin, although they do not think children without baptism to be damned, yet do they judge the baptism of children to be necessary, and that for just causes. And what Christian would willingly suffer his child to die without the sacrament of regeneration, the lack whereof (though it be not a necessary) yet may it seem to be a probable token and sign of reprobation."

understanding and perception of the invisible and spiritual ; and tends to the entire loss of that spirituality it aims to preserve. To endeavour, from the self-righteous abuse of a formalist, to discard all forms, is to make ourselves wiser than He who knew what was in man, and what man required, and has explicitly appointed forms for our use ; and experience has shewn that it is unavailing for its professed end.

2. The PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHURCH, from the beginning, is clear. The apostle, in consequence of the command of Christ, went forth and baptized all who received the gospel. On the day of Pentecost, when the Jews, pricked in their hearts, asked, " What shall we do ? " they were plainly directed, not only " Repent," but also, " be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ " (Acts ii. 38) ; and about three thousand gladly received his word, and were baptized. When Cornelius and his household had received the Holy Ghost, Peter " commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In this command he set a pattern which the apostle Paul copied afterwards, not baptizing himself, lest the external rite should be unduly magnified, but yet commanding the baptism lest it should be slighted and neglected.

Through the Acts of the Apostles, and through their Epistles, we have frequent indications that baptism was practised by them. The Ethiopian eunuch no sooner confessed his faith in Christ than he was baptized by Philip. Lydia no sooner had her heart opened to attend to the things which were spoken of Paul, than " she was baptized and her whole household," (Acts xvi. 15) ; and, soon afterwards, the jailer, seeing his danger, and flying to Christ, " was baptized, he and all his, straightway," (ver. 33.) The Ephesian church was founded on twelve of John the Baptist's disciples being " baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Acts xix. 5. Through the Epistles, Christians are argued with on the ground of their baptism, (Rom. vi. ; 1 Cor. 1. ; Gal. iii. ; Col. ii. &c.) and are considered as being " by one Spirit all baptized into one body."

1 Cor. xii. 13. The practice then of the church, as recorded in the scriptures, founded on Christ's command, confirms the plain obligation of baptism.

Baptism is also CONNECTED WITH SALVATION. It is evident that the obligation of baptism is greatly strengthened by the connection which the scriptures declare to exist between this ordinance and our salvation. Our Lord says, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Mark xvi. 16. It has been the general faith of the church, that, in the discourse with Nicodemus, our Lord had a special reference to baptism, in connection with the new birth, when he so solemnly testifies, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven in its present state on earth, which is but its commencemeut, may be regarded as two-fold ; visible, including all professing Christians ; and invisible, including only those truly converted to God. The laver of regeneration in baptism, is requisite for admission into the outward visible, and to be born of the Spirit is requisite for admission into the spiritual and invisible kingdom.

In harmony with this is the testimony of Peter : "Even baptism doth also now save us : not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter iii. 21. The Holy Spirit has thus connected baptism with salvation. But let us take heed that we mistake not the connection. It is not meant that all the unbaptized shall not be saved ; the distinction carefully made here by our Lord should not be overlooked ; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." We have no mention of "is not baptized," in the second and condemning part of our Lord's words. The dying thief was not baptized, and yet was assured that he would be with Christ in paradise. The Israelites who were baptized in the Red Sea, failed, through unbelief, to enter Canaan. Baptism is a divinely-appointed means towards our salvation, in the right acceptation of which

what is needful for salvation may be expected, and in the wilful and voluntary neglect of which we lose the benefit of God's promises made in that ordinance. It is a great mistake to say that without baptism there is no salvation ; but it is also a great sin to disregard the Lord's plain command, which he has connected with salvation ; and this sin cannot but be followed with evil consequences.

The immediate benefits of this ordinance will be considered in a separate chapter. As the ark was a means of escaping the wrath coming on the ungodly, and yet contained a wicked Ham ; as the Passover was a means of preserving the Israelites from the destruction of the firstborn, and yet many Israelites perished in the wilderness ; as the baptism in the Red Sea preserved them from Pharaoh's army, and yet never entered into Canaan ; so is baptism connected with salvation, but it may all be made void by unbelief, and we may perish with the ungodly. Yet the obligation to observe it, only with faith, is most clear.

The sacraments were expressly DESIGNED TO BE OBSERVED by the church TILL OUR LORD'S RETURN. When our Lord appointed each sacrament, he connected with each, statements to shew this. At the appointment of the Lord's supper he said, " I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." And the apostle Paul says of it, " As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 26. At the appointment of baptism his declaration to his church is, " Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world," (ἑως της συντελειας τθ αιωνος,) and it conveys the same important truth. The sacraments are visible signs of good things to come, even of that perfect holiness and of that heavenly banquet promised to the children of God in the coming kingdom of glory ; and they are to be prized and diligently kept till we arrive at that glory.

In farther considering this appointment, let us notice what is THE MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTISM. It is ori-

ginally a Greek word, which has been adopted into our language, as having in its use at least a more general signification than immersing and dipping; such as pouring water on, washing or bathing, and including, by the scriptural illustration of symbolical cleansing, these modes of the application of water to the body. It was the general habit in eastern countries to bathe frequently, so that bathing was to them as customary as washing is to us. Either immersion, therefore, or pouring water on the head of a person at the water,* was the frequent practice of the first churches. No one can read Bingham's account of Baptism without admitting the early practice of immersion. We see in the scriptures that they were sometimes baptized by the side of a river, (Matt. iii.; Mark i.; John iii. 23.) or of a pool; (Acts viii. 38.) but even here it is not certain that more was done than going into the water and pouring of water on the head. It is again highly improbable that the 3000 baptized at once in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, were immersed. (Acts ii. 41.) The promised baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, was fulfilled by their being filled with, or the falling of the Spirit, and tongues of fire sitting on each: there was no immersion here. (Matt. iii. 11; Acts ii. 1—4; x. 44.) Our Lord, alluding to the bloody sweat and the pouring out of his blood on the cross, says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with;" no literal immersion is necessary to justify this figure. The same term, (*βαπτισμους*), (Matt. vii. 4,) is applied to "the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and of tables or beds." This was not necessarily by immersion. When we consider the multitudes that went to John's baptism, (Matt. iii. 5.) the presence of much water in an eastern country might be requisite for other purposes besides immersion. (Johu iii. 23.)† The church of England leaves the minister at liberty to dip or pour water.

* See note at the end of this chapter. See also Taylor's Facts and Evidences on the subject of Baptism.

† In the times of Athanasius, Ambrose, and Chrysostom, they had baptisteries, and were immersed, being unclothed, when baptised. See Bingham, i. 521. I would fully admit with the Baptists the original meaning of *βαπτω*

This may suffice as to the outward mode in administering baptism ; for the author is unwilling to detain the reader on so very unprofitable a controversy, so uncongenial to the whole spiritual character and glory of the gospel, and so calculated, when men remain in the outside form, to lead to self-righteousness and self-exaltation, and despising others. The design being to signify cleansing, let water be used and applied to the body in any quantity, however minute, and in any of the senses which the original word, by customary use, bears, according to the institution of Christ, and it is true baptism. Oh ! how has the enemy of souls prevailed to divide, weaken, and pollute Christians, by disputes about the mode of administration, and so effectually to turn them from the spiritual character and due improvement of the ordinance itself.

On the subjects of baptism we shall have to speak more fully afterwards. I would only here remark, that the term, " all nations," is universally comprehensive of all ages ; as is the term μαθητευω, specially appropriate to infants, as learners and disciples.

It is needless in a Protestant country to refute the absurd practice of Popery in baptizing bells, &c. This was one of the Centum Gravamina of the German Diet at Nuremberg in 1518. Nor would I enter on the other peculiarities of Popery ; however early they may have been practised, they have no warrant in God's word.

The MEANING OF THE ORDINANCE is simple and acknowledged, and unspeakably important. Everywhere impurities of the body are cleansed by washing the body with water, and this universal practice is by baptism made the foundation of a great spiritual lesson, the cleansing of the soul from the filthiness of sin. In this divinely-appointed rite, by the outward application of water to the body, in the name of the sacred Trinity, is pointed out to the eye of faith the invisible and inward purification of the

being to dip, and acquiring by use a farther meaning of dyeing, or tinging, and thence gather a like conclusion as to βαπτιζω. A note appended to this chapter will explain this more fully.

soul, and all the spiritual and eternal blessings gained through the knowledge of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We have in Isaiah and in Ezekiel the figure and the substance, the sign and the blessing, thus joined together. In Isaiah the promise is more direct to the parent, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." In Ezekiel the promise is to all the seed of Israel. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall do them." Who can read such precious promises without saying, Be it thus unto me, O Lord: Be it unto thy servant as thou hast said.

The rite of baptism is on God's part a representation and means of the grant of these spiritual blessings, and on our part a representation and means of the receiving of them.

The varied statements which have been thus brought from the holy scriptures, shew with what justice the church of England, in its 27th Article, has defined thus this ordinance: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of forgiveness of sin and our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Spirit, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the church as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

Farther light is thrown on the meaning of this ordinance

by comparing it with its accompanying sacrament, the Lord's Supper; the only two ordinances of the Christian religion which correspond to the description given of a sacrament: "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." By baptism I am admitted into the Christian church. Acts ii. 41. By the Lord's Supper, I testify my continuance in it. Baptism describes the first entrance on the Christian life; the Lord's Supper describes the continued maintenance of that life. By baptism is set before me my death in sins and my new life in Christ Jesus. By the Lord's Supper is set before me my spiritual nourishment for my soul's health and strength in daily feeding on Christ. By baptism the cleansing of sin by Christ's blood, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost, as the life-giving Spirit quickening my soul, is exhibited. By the Lord's Supper, Jesus' death, as the ransom for my sins, continually beheld by faith, is declared to be the means of my soul's daily sustenance, as Christ our Lord says, "As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." By baptism received in faith, I am grafted into the Church, promises are sealed to me and graces increased. By the Lord's Supper, received in faith, I really feed on Christ. We see in both the redemption of the ordinary necessaries and enjoyments of life, from a mere bodily and sensual use, to the designation of high and holy realities of spiritual blessings. And the Lord seems to be thus preparing his church for the full redemption of all earthly things to that high use we may expect when the promise is realized, "Behold, I make all things new." Rev. xxi. 5.

The reception of baptism only once bears a striking witness to the completeness of that forgiveness there is in the blood of Jesus, and the constant all-sufficiency of his atonement for all our sins. The reception of the Lord's Supper continually points out the need of continued faith for spiritual nourishment, and the constantly-renewed

communion to be enjoyed with our Lord now in glory, and with our brethren gone before us, and here on earth a foretaste of that feast preparing for us in the coming kingdom of our Redeemer. God as a righteous judge has forgiven all our sins, as we see in the acceptance of Jesus, our surety and Redeemer; and he daily now, as a loving Father, pardons our daily offences confessed before him in the name of Christ.

The spiritual import of the term WATER seems most appropriately to be first applied to the Holy Ghost. We see very frequently in the Scriptures that his grace is compared to the beneficial influence of water, (Isa. xliv. 3: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26; Joel ii. 28; John viii. 38), and in the expression, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," they seem united together with reference to baptism. The first spiritual import, then, of baptism with water, is cleansing by baptism with the Holy Ghost, specially promised as the peculiar and gracious work of our Lord and the privilege of his people.

Yet there is a WASHING WITH BLOOD not to be lost sight of, and ever connected with the gift of the Holy Spirit, who, it is promised, shall take of Christ's, and shew them to us. "The blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin"—"unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." "These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." These may well be joined together in baptism, as they are by the Apostle: "But ye are washed," there is the outward baptism; "but ye are sanctified," there is the inward cleansing: "but ye are justified," there is the acceptance as righteous before God, "in the name of the Lord Jesus," who has procured every blessing, and "by the Spirit of our God," who affects all within us. Thus Ambrose says, "There are three things in baptism,—water, blood, Spirit. If you take away one of these, the sacrament of baptism does not remain."

And to these may be joined THE WORD ITSELF, as another bath or means of cleansing the soul connected with

baptism ; "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word." It is the truths of God's word that reach the mind and the heart, and really cleanse the soul. Thus our Saviour prays, "Sanctify them through the truth : thy word is truth." The various powers of the mind and affections need as much daily contact with and cleansing by the word, to remove the filth of sin, as the outward members of the body need daily contact with and cleansing by water, to remove the daily gathered uncleanness of the body. May we, then, constantly make use of the word, the blood, and the spirit of Jesus for the cleansing of our souls !

The DEDICATION of the baptized unto God is implied in the direction to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Not only am I brought under this shelter, and the rich enjoyment of a full portion in the triune Jehovah as my God and my portion for ever, but I am enlisted into all the privileges and holiness of that happy service which is perfect freedom ; I am dedicated to his honour and glory. St. Paul shews at length, (Rom. vi. 3—14.) that baptism is a great motive for yielding ourselves to God. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death : therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Let not sin, therefore reign in your mortal bodies ; but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead."

The goodness of God, as revealed in his gospel, and exhibited in baptism, is calculated to lead us to repentance, and to constrain us not to live to ourselves, but to him who died for us. The promises made at baptism (*συνειδησεως αγαθης επερωτημα εις θεον*) the profession of a good conscience towards God, include a solemn renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil,—a confession of faith in the one living and true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and a purpose of heart to walk in all God's holy will and ways.

It is a marked sign of separation from the world and its vanities, and of our being set apart as the disciples of Christ for his service, his will, and his glory. O happy course! for all "his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are paths of peace." May we know the loving-kindness of God in all his gracious appointments, and have a heart within us corresponding to his grace, and welcoming all his love to us.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II.

The following remarks on the mode and subjects of Baptism have been furnished hy a friend in answer to the objections of the Baptists.

'The Baptist maintains that the word Βαπτιζω, in its proper classic usage, means to dip or immerse only. He further asserts, that when applied to the ordinance of Christ, this idea of a specific mode remains so essential, that without it the ordinance is void. He believes, that although the minister design solemnly to administer Christ's ordinance, though the believer designs to receive it, though the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit be invoked, though the elements of water be used—unless the whole body be immersed beneath the element, the whole is vain and nugatory, and the party remains unbaptized.

'The churchman, on the other hand, allows that to dip is the primary and almost constant meaning of the word in classic authors. He further admits, that probahly, if not certainly, in some of the Scripture instances, and possibly in all, immersion was practised. But he helieves that when once the word was regularly applied to the ordinance of Christ, it received a new and more important element of meaning, and that thenceforward the idea of one specific mode was no longer essential. He sees that in Scripture, dipping, pouring, and sprinkling are all variously used as signs of spiritual cleansing. He knows that in ceremonial observances, Christ has enjoined regard to decency, comeliness, order, and convenience. He is aware that total immersion, in colder climates and tender age, is less convenient. He believes that Christ has given to his church authority in preciscly such points of outward order, to appoint, under varying circumstances, as the spirit of wisdom shall teach and suggest. He therefore concurs

fully in the arrangement of the church in this land, by which dipping is proposed as the standard mode, the more primitive and fully significant, but in which, for seemliness or safety, pouring is expressly appointed in certain cases, and sprinkling practically allowed in all.

'The meaning of the words are thus given by an able Baptist. "1st. Βαπτω, except when it signifies to dye, denotes *mode*, and nothing but mode. 2dly. Βαπτω and Βαπτιζω are exactly the same in meaning, as to increase or diminution of the action. That the one is more or less than the other, as to mode or frequency, is a groundless conceit. 3dly. There is one important difference. Βαπτω is never used to denote the ordinance of baptism, and Βαπτιζω never signifies to dye. The primitive word has two meanings,—the primary, to dip; the secondary, to dye. But the derivative is formed to modify the primary only. 4thly. Βαπτω means only to dye. And although this meaning arose from the mode of dyeing by dipping, yet the word has come by appropriation to denote *dyeing* without reference to mode. As this point is of material consequence in this controversy, I shall establish it by examples that put it beyond question. Nothing in the history of words is more common than to enlarge or diminish their signification. Ideas not originally inclnded are often affixed, while others drop ideas originally asserted. In this way Βαπτω from signifying mere mode, came to be applied to a certain operation usually performed in that mode. From signifying to dip, it came to signify to dye by dipping, because this was the way in which things were usually dyed. And afterwards, from dyeing by dipping, it came to denote dyeing in any manner. A like process may be shewn in the history of a thousand other words."

'These remarks are distinct and clear. They are also substantially true. But they really overthrow his own theory. He has given us the strongest warrant for extending the meaning of Βαπτιζω, by shewing us the like extension in its primitive, Βαπτω, from the very same cause. He has proved that the idea of mode is secondary, and nonessential, when Βαπτιζω is applied to the sacrament of Christ, by proving the very same of its primitive, Βαπτω, when used in the sense of dyeing. The author has left no link wanting in his own refutation. The two words originally signify the same, as to mode. Βαπτω acquires the secondary sense of dyeing; Βαπτιζω acquires the secondary sense of baptizing. Βαπτω, from dyeing, by dipping, comes to denote dyeing in any manner. Βαπτιζω, from baptizing, by dipping, comes to denote baptizing in any manner. What analogy can be more perfect? What justification of the practice of the church can be more complete?

'On the subjects of Baptism the main stress is laid on the commis-

sion, Matt. xxviii., which it is contended, excludes all hut actual helievers. Let us, in a few words, examine this, his cardinal and main argument.

'The commission of Christ does not contain the words, Go and haptize helievers—still less, Go and haptize helievers only. The only command expressed on the suhject is, to baptize all nations. The only limitation to be learned hy inference is previous discipleship. The words in Mark contain no command to haptize at all ; they are a promise to haptized helievers. There is no ground in the commission for saying that St. Mark calls the same persons believers, whom St. Matthew calls disciples. If disciples and helievers are synonimous, the proof must he found elsewhere, here there is none.

'In fact, the commission of itself, waving other arguments, rather implies than excludes infant haptism. Taken in the narrowest sense the word allows, it commands all disciples to he haptized. Now a disciple is simply a learner. And the infants of pious and believing parents are, from their very hirth, learners of Christ ; they are hy providence placed immediately under the teaching of those who are themselves taught hy Christ, and who are his appointed channels for imparting divine truth to them. They are, in the strictest sense of the word, μαθηται. Learners they are hy the necessity of their age and hy the privilege of helieving parents, learners of Christ. To shut them out of the ordinance is then to reject those whom Christ has himself included.

'Nay, the argument may he carried still further. We have reasoned as if the words had heen, Go, disciple all nations, and haptize the disciples, &c. But these are not the exact terms. Our Lord's command is, Go, and disciple all nations, baptizing them, &c. If we press the force of the letter, setting aside all scripture analogy and argument, and all the testimony of the church, we should he led rather to the compulsory haptism of the ungodly, than to the exclusion of infants. It is reason, scripture, analogy, and attention to the spirit of command, which alone warrant any limitation, and these alike require that the only restriction should be drawn from the previous clause, and that the term disciples should he there interpreted in the largest sense.'

Two replies only scem possible to this reasoning. It may he alieged that the word Βαπτιζω has never in fact undergone a like change of meaning as is admitted in the kindred word. And further, that after the ordinance was once appointed, no change afterwards could affect the strict ohligation of immersion.

The first statement is so evidently untrue that it scarce needs refutation. There is not one work of the strictest advocate of immersion, which does not yield ahundant materials to disprove it. To suhsti-

tute *immersion* for *baptism*, and to *immerse* for to *baptize*, would turn some sentence in almost every page into mere nonsense. If the sense were not changed, every immersion would be, in the actual usage of terms, a baptism, which is manifestly untrue.

But still this entire change, it may he urged, cannot affect the force of the original ordinance; now the answer to this is, in the first place, that the change had previously hegun. It is in *classic* usage, as granted ahove, that the word means to *dip* simply. But it is not true of the Hellenic use, among the Jews of the time of onr Lord. It has been proved by many writers, and is clear hoth from St. Mark and St. Paul, that it had already heen appropriated to an ecclesiastical sense, and included the notice of a ritual purification.

Again, even allowing, what is not the fact, that the change had not previously hegun, the fact of the institution would of itself introduce it. It would he easy to prove this on grounds of reason, but would require too much space. It is enough to confirm it hy a parallel case, which is exactly in point. The supper of the Jews or Greeks, it is well known, was the last meal of the day; now the other sacrament is by inspired authority, called the Lord's Supper. But because a fresh and more important element of meaning has heen introduced, the idea of a participation of food alone remains permanent; the special notion of its heing the latest meal becomes variable, hy the very fact of the appointment. The reason which would make immersion essential to the haptism, would make it essential to the Lord's Supper to he the last meal in the day. But this restriction is rejected by the judgment and the practice of every hody of Christians. The other restriction may and ought therefore to he rejected on the same ground.

May we all he led to that caution and modesty in our assertions, and that forhearance in our judgment of others, which hefits our characteras merely learners still; then should we all he brought sooner to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE THRICE HOLY NAME INTO WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE BAPTIZED.

The most remarkable part of the appointment of baptism is, that the Lord thereby gives us the clearest and most fully revealed knowledge we have in the Scriptures, of the unity, and yet distinct threefold personality, of that unspeakably glorious being, the only living and true God. Baptism brings us into immediate and direct relationship with him, in those united, distributed, divine, and yet personal glories which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost possess, as engaged for our salvation and everlasting blessedness.

It is remarkable that the very entrance into the Church of Christ introduces us to the highest and deepest of its mysteries, and the fulness of human happiness, the knowledge and enjoyment of God. "This is the life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

In the direction to disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, (Βαπτιζοντες αυτους εις το ονομα του Πατρος και του Υιου και του Αγιου Πνευματος) there is a largeness of instruction and blessing that we can probably yet but little discern. How can we know all the fulness of Him of whom Moses, who, beyond others, was permitted to "see God face to face," (Deut. xxxiv. 10,) hid "in a cleft of the rock," saw but the back parts? How glorious even that revelation was,

we see in that proclamation of it, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands (of generations), forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation." Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

When we begin to think and speak of the great God, it becomes us to think and speak with the deepest humility and reverence. We speak of the source of all being, we speak of one infinitely above us, and infinitely beyond us, and yet on whom we wholly depend for life, and breath, and all things. To use to the utmost every means that he has given us for knowing, and worshipping, and enjoying him, is our clearest duty. The direction to baptize all nations into his name distinctly shews that God would have all nations brought to this their highest happiness.

Let us first view each name distinctly, next the oneness of the name, and then baptism into it; and lastly this as designed for all nations.

THE NAME OF THE FATHER is first mentioned by our Lord, that we may be led to see the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, giving his authority and his blessing with baptism, and leading us thereby back to himself. It is not the minister into whose name we are baptized. How explicitly St. Paul renounced this: "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any one should say that I had baptized in my own name." 1 Cor. i. 13—15. The Father himself adopts us. His name is love, and "he so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." Our Lord begins with the free mercy of God the Father, whom he sets forth thus as the fountain-head of all goodness and blessing, desiring our restoration into his family, and taking a most encouraging first step for accomplishing this his amazing

grace and loving kindness towards the rebellious nations of the earth.

THE NAME OF THE SON is the next step in this mystery of love. And what wonders are connected with this name in all its varied fulness of meaning. He is the SON OF GOD, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ; and there are mysteries and glories in this his eternal generation, unfathomable and exhaustless. He is also the SON OF MAN. We frequently find these interchanged and joined together. When the high priest asks our Lord whether he was "the Christ," the SON OF GOD, he acknowledges it, yet immediately styles himself THE SON OF MAN, Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. When he asks, "Whom do men say that I THE SON OF MAN am ?" Peter replies, "Thou art Christ THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD ;" and our Lord says, that the "Father had revealed this" to him. Matt. xvi. 13—17. As Son of Man he lived, he died for all, and invites all to partake of his salvation. Here we discern, God brought into a close, inseparable, perfect union with the very nature of man, so full of loving kindness, as can never be duly magnified. God and man are one Christ ; and in that union we see, by the eye of faith, Immanuel, God with us, and all the inestimably precious work of our redemption and restoration to oneness with God.

THE NAME OF THE HOLY GHOST yet farther unfolds the glories of God and his goodness to man. The only begotten Son of the Most High has opened the way for the descent of the Holy Ghost to sinful men. Having received of the Father this promised gift, he only is privileged to shed it upon us, that we may be truly regenerated, sanctified, and made partakers of all divine blessings. This Divine Spirit is the Lord and giver of life ; he proceeds from the Father and the Son, and, together with the Father and the Son, is worshipped and glorified. He comes into, and inhabits the human body as his own temple, and there remains for ever as the Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter of each member of the Church of Christ.

Thus distinct, as are the Persons of the Trinity, there

is but ONE NAME, "one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity;" for we can find out no better terms to describe this mystery, than those to which God has led his church, in its long conflicts with heresy. As Christians were first so called at Antioch, so was the name of Trinity first given to our glorious God, by Theophilus the Bishop of Antioch. Thus it brought before us the perfect oneness of the Divine Being. Into the holy and happy joys of this oneness, God the Father, Son, and Spirit seek to bring the human race; "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John xvii. 21.

No part of this name must be lost, in our view of the grace of baptism. We need the whole: the adoption of the Father, the mediation, headship, and oneness with us of the Son, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

Into this name we are to be BAPTIZED, wholly immersed and cleansed thereby; that is, redeemed, justified, restored, adopted, blessed and purified, and finally glorified. Hereby it is acknowledged that the Father has adopted us, the Son has cleansed us in his blood, and the Holy Ghost has regenerated and sanctified us, and we are brought into complete subjection and fellowship with God, even with our own God. The more clearly to discern the importance of this, let us notice the true condition in which we now are. The property of sin is to separate the creature from the Creator, to cast us out of his sight and presence and favour. We see it in the first transgression: we see it in all the effects of sin—"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you." Isaiah lix. 2. Thus though "God be not far from every one of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being," and the joyful consciousness of this is the proper condition of every human being, yet being by wicked works "alienated, and enemies in our minds," we are "afar off" from him, and live as "without God in the world." O deplorable condition of guilty man, in wilful enmity with

his Creator, Sustainer, and only true rest and portion! That man might be reconciled to God, is one great design of the glorious gospel (2 Cor. v. 19.) To bring us back, in a right state of mind, to the realizing presence and enjoyment of God, so that we may know him and walk with him always, and be like him, and delight in him: nothing less than this is the great purpose of God's love in Christ Jesus. See how St. John writes: "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John i. 3. Through his epistle he shews that the proper standing of a Christian is to dwell in God. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 13—16. Baptism, then, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is the first step to restoration to the divine indwelling, God in us, and we in God. It is the beginning of that life of holiness and blessedness, and of that return of God to man, and of man to God, in a heavenly kingdom, which will only be perfected when God's purposes are so completed, that "God shall be all in all," (1 Cor. xv. 28.) or in the sublime words of St. John, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

The first step is an admission, on God's part, into these glorious privileges—our immersion into his name; a doctrine so sweetly unfolded in the innumerable practical and experimental descriptions of the privileges of Christians in the New Testament, as connected with the living God. Thus St. Peter describes us as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus

Christ." 1 Peter i. 2. Thus St. Jude calls us to build "up ourselves in our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost to keep ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 20, 21.

Admitted gratuitously through God's loving-kindness into this name and these unspeakable blessings, then are we in a prepared state of mind for those lessons of practical obedience, which we can only attain through the previous grace given to us. Thus our Lord carries on his commission, by giving the following injunctions with reference to those thus baptized, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The privilege precedes the duty, the justification goes before the sanctification, the promise opens the door for the practice.

We have yet farther to notice the large extent of this commission, comprehending ALL NATIONS; all nations are to be discipled and baptized. "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." He will have every human being to be a learner, and every learner to be baptized, and brought into all the blessings of his name, and then, in the lively faith of those blessings, to be taught to observe the whole loving and gracious, righteous and holy commandments of our divine Redeemer.

What purposes of love are here! O that the unbelief and worldliness of the church, O that the indifference and alienation of men at large should stop the current of mercy, and refuse, as far as man can refuse, to let it refresh, as it was intended in the command to do, every nation under heaven, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

See then the glorious position of true Christians. They are stamped with the Divine name. The name of Christian is not a fiction, but a reality. They have put on "the new man which after God is created in righteousness and

true holiness." Each, as Ignatius confessed before Trajan, is one who carries God, or one who has Christ in his breast. As it was the glorious property of Christ, "my name is in him," (Exod. xxiii. 21.) so the name was put on the children of Israel, (Numb. vi. 17.) and is now put in baptism on every Christian, teaching him that he is to share the character and partake of the joys of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. To be like the one living and true God, and to drink of the rivers of his pleasures, is our everlasting blessedness.

Our present situation in the church of Christ on earth is but a tuition and education for this eternal state of glory. Every step from baptism to the return of our Lord and our gathering together to him is but our preparation and instruction under the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghost for this glory. Baptism is God's first token of our heavenly birth and eternal inheritance, which is nothing less than God himself; for each faithful Christian is "an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ," and may say with joy of heart, "the Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup. Thou maintainest my lot."

How is it that this is not realized? that the world is full of baptized infidels and idolaters? that there is every where such a falling away from the faith of Christ?

It is clear that the fault, in our country, is not in the church of England. Her baptismal service and her elementary instruction in the Catechism, and her fuller instruction in the Articles and Homilies, all proceed on these scriptural principles.

But are we in the ministry equally free from blame? Have not ministers on one side lost the idea of our true spiritual blessedness in Christ, and by the Holy Ghost? Have not ministers on the other side lost sight of Baptism as a scriptural foundation of hope, and purity, and gratitude? Have we taken advantage of God's providential and gracious dealings in bringing our whole nation, in their infancy, into the situation of disciples, and baptising us into his name, to make those strong appeals which such

grace to us requires? Have we not gone either simply on the idea of electing love to the saved, or on the general grounds of God's love to all men ; rather than, in the union of both, taken the large ground of God's peculiar love to his people, that they may be the salt of the earth ; and his remarkable favour to us as a Christian nation, and thence deduced our high duties and responsibilities ? There is a special grace to the elect, but it makes them the vessels of mercy to their fellow-men, and there is a special grace to nations, but it is that they may be a blessing to nations less privileged. Every gift is given to us to profit withal. For himself, the author would confess his sinfulness in these respects, and he desires to leave the subject on the minds of his brethren in the ministry and his readers at large, with an acknowledgment of his own neglect in the earlier years of his ministry. Because men have trusted in outward baptism instead of trusting only in Christ; because men have neglected the reality of spiritnal life, while they have urged the laver of regeneration : because the form has been too much magnified and the grace in which that form is communicated has been too little regarded, serious as these errors are, and as we see in our Lord's discourses with the Pharisees, truly soul destructive, we must not empty the sacraments of grace, and make them a mere sign. This is to lose faith in God's love and his appointed means of grace, as much on the one side as the opposite system does on the other. All the blessing is received through faith. We may apply here to baptism (taking in parents and sponsors and the child as it grows up) what our church has stated respecting the Lord's Supper. "Thus we see, beloved, that resorting to this table [or baptismal font] we must pluck up all the roots of infidelity, all distrust in God's promises, that we make ourselves living members of Christ's body. For the unbelievers and faithless cannot feed upon that precious body, or be fully regenerate in his sight. Whereas THE FAITHFUL have their life, their abiding in him, their union and their incorporation, as it were, with him. Wherefore let

us prove and try ourselves unfeignedly, without flattering ourselves, whether we be plants of the fruitful olive, living branches of the true vine, members indeed of Christ's mystical body, whether God hath purified our hearts by faith, to the sincere acknowledgment of his gospel and embracing of his mercies in Christ Jesus, so that at his table [or at this, his laver of regeneration,] we receive, not only the outward sacrament, but the spiritual thing also ; not the figure, but the truth ; not the shadow only, but the body ; not to death, but to life : not to destruction, but to salvation, which God grant us to do, through the merits of our Lord and Saviour, to whom be all honour and glory, for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROMISE OF THE SAVIOUR'S PRESENCE IN BAPTISM.

The first book of the New Testament closes with the appointment of baptism, to which is joined that remarkable and most cheering promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world :" the last book of the New Testament closes with the same gracious truth— "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." The promise that the Saviour would always be with his people was specially designed for the comfort of the church in his personal absence. Remarkably were the disciples led to the true meaning of these words, for they were followed by that event which seemed a direct contradiction to them, and to make them literally false. "After the Lord had spoken to them, a cloud received him out of their sight, and he was taken up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God." By this temporary absence He prepared the way for all the blessings of his spiritual presence: and that bodily absence but spiritual presence is directly connected with his visible and personal return. Acts i. 11. Rev. xxii. 20. This is the great object of his church's hope and desire. Titus ii. 13. Rev. xxii. 17.

It may be profitable here to notice the distinctness of the manifestations of the Lord's presence in the various ages of the church.

In "Paradise," before the fall, God manifested himself visibly to our first parents, walking in the very garden with them in the cool of the day and talking with them ;

they lived in the full flow of his goodness and loving-kindness, (Gen. i. 28, 29 ; ii. 16—22 ; iii. 8.) but they sinned and lost this near sight of God.

Yet God still had compassion on sinful men, and afterwards to Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, there were appearances of the living God, some being in a visible form. This was more remarkably still the privilege of Moses, of whom it is said, "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face," (Deut. xxxiv. 10.) speaking to him "face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." Exod. xxxiii. 11.

At length God set apart "the nation of Israel" for himself and to be a blessing to the earth, and distinguished them from all others, by a visible dwelling among them. For this end, among various other rites, He had a tabernacle, made according to the pattern of heavenly things, in which He dwelt, and manifested himself visibly on extraordinary occasions, and gave audible answers to guide this nation aright. It was called the tabernacle of the congregation, not merely because the people met together, but because God himself there met the assembled people. Exod. xxv. 22 ; xxix. 42, 43 ; xxxiii. 7. When Moses went in he heard the very voice of God. Numb. vii. 8, 9. On one occasion all the people saw the glory of the Lord. Lev. ix. 23. God, in fact, resided among them, seated on the mercy-seat between the Cherubims, and was visible there to the High Priest, when he went into the Holy of holies. Lev. xvi. 2. This was the glory of the Jewish nation, as we see by their frequent reference to it, 2 Kings xix. 15. 1 Chron. xiii. 6. Psalm lxxx. 1 ; xcix. 1 ; ix. 11 ; lxxvi. 2 ; l. 2. It was, however, a blessing confined to one place and one nation.

This national favour became, through their high-mindedness, self-righteousness and disobedience, the occasion of their fall. They trusted in the outward temple and its glory : (Jer. vii. 4, 12.) and this visible presence was taken away at the captivity in Babylon and not restored in the second temple, the Lord purposing to lead his church to a

higher state of spiritual blessedness, by taking from it, for a season, the visible display of his glory.

This purpose of his love was effected by the Christian dispensation; in which the Lord, after he had been seen of men and angels, manifest in the flesh, was no longer visible on earth; but a real presence not confined to one nation, was, and is everywhere manifested spiritually, according to the promise—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20. And this with a far higher and fuller blessing. The epistle to the Hebrews shews abundantly that all the rites and services of the law of Moses were but figures of good things to come; (see especially chap. viii. ix. x.) these good things we now enjoy in spirit, through faith; being already come, as it were, to the foot of the "Mount Zion," (Heb. xii. 22.) "And raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Ephes. ii. 6. Christ is now the true mercy-seat, (Rom. iii. 25.) and the throne of grace (Heb. iv. 16.) to which all have access. Heb. x. 19, 21. He is ever in the midst of his churches, (Rev. ii. 1.) and with a spiritual, but a real presence, presides over, assists, influences and governs their assembly. The word of Christ is read, and preached, and heard; the Spirit of Christ comes to his people; the praises of Christ are sung, and He manifests himself really to them. John xiv. 22—24. And this presence is enduring; there is much strength in the expression—"I am with you always, to the end of the world." (πασας τας ημερας εως της συντελειας τϑ αιωνος, all the days to the finishing or full end of the age, or world.) He will be with us every day without intermitting so much as one day to the end of the world.

The spiritual presence of Christ, "always, even unto the end of the world" is associated, by our Lord, with the appointment of baptism, and the discipling and instructing of all nations. While then it is a universal promise belonging to all circumstances of the church of Christ, it has a direct reference to the ministry of the word, and the or-

dinance of baptism. It is also such a blessed promise that we may well give it a distinct consideration.

The giver of this promise is the Lord himself. The very promise is full of divine glory : every term speaking that glory. "I am with you" is the language of Deity. "God said unto Moses, I am that I am, and he said, Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you." It is language that our Lord, here and in the statements—"Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58.)—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"—appropriates to himself, avoiding the natural form of expression, to bring in the reality of his Godhead as well as his omnipresence. O the mysteries of glory encircling Christ Jesus! "He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man" could say, at the same time, and while on earth, "which is in heaven." Though on earth, it could be said of him, "The only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

But with all this glory, He who speaks the promises appears as a man, wearing our very form ; having our flesh, and bones, and blood, the members and senses of our body ; the words, image, and substance of man. He has hence all the sympathies of our nature. He is one who can enter into our fears and our hopes, our feelings and our wants, our sorrows and our joys, every suffering and every temptation is known to him. We have a High Priest "touched with a feeling of our infirmities." We have not only the mystery of Christ on earth and Christ in heaven, but the mystery of God manifest in the flesh, Immanuel, God with us.

And how refreshing and endearing to his disconsolate disciples this assurance! Sorrow had filled their hearts when they heard of his leaving : now they hear of a presence that will never be taken from them. If their souls were inflamed with love, from the compassion, kindness, and excellencies of this life, how would that love be augmented by the grace manifested in his agony, sufferings,

and death ! How sweet, after all he had gone through, to hear that He would never really leave them nor forsake them !

It is unnecessary here to enter at large into the SPECIALITY of the promise as here made to the apostles and their successors. Some things were peculiar to the apostles, as their commission was direct from Christ, their gifts miraculous, and their diocese the world at large. Some things are general ; and these descend to those who have succeeded them ; such as preaching, admitting into the church by baptism, administering the Lord's Supper, putting the wicked out of the church, absolving the penitent, and ordaining elders.

The threefold order of the ministry may be distinctly seen in the scriptures, as the author has shewn in his Christian Hearer, but he has there stated that he dares not condemn those churches who have not been so happy as to have this scriptural and primitive plan of church government continued to them. Our church has beautifully combined both these views, stating, in the preface, before the ordination of its ministers : ' It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church, bishops, priests, and deacons.' And yet it states, in its Articles, justifying our harmony with foreign Protestant churches,—' It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent ; and those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.'

Oh that we in the ministry may ever be more anxious about the solemn trust and responsibility, than about the peculiar distinctions and honour of the ministry ! When we are seeking its dignity, without humbling ourselves to its sacrifices and servitude (2 Cor. iv. 5.), we are acting in

the spirit of popery (3 John 9. 2 Thess. ii. 4); and are likely to come under that sentence, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased." Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14.

And very solemn is the trust of rightly administering sacraments. Mr. Strong thus notices it in his book on the Covenant: 'I find in the administration of the seals of the covenant, as well as in the application of the promises of the covenant, that they are to be administered with judgment in the parties that do administer them, and that there is a great trust and a special charge committed to them therein: Matt. vii. "Give not that which is holy unto dogs." It is a dangerous evil for a man either wittingly or negligently to dispense the ordinances of God and the privileges of the covenant, to those unto whom God did never intend them, as it is to deny them unto those whose right they are. The trust committed unto officers in this kind is exceeding great, and therefore the account will be dreadful. For what is a particular visible church, but a "golden candlestick," and the "spouse of Christ," and "the body of Christ?" Now how great a trust is it to be employed in things of so high concernment; and how dangerous must the error needs be to espouse a soul to Christ, that He neither can nor will own for his! How great a wrong is it! Now the nearer the relation the greater the transgression; and so it is to place a member in the body of Christ that He abhors; and therefore admissions and ejections of church members are some of the greatest acts of men's lives, and should be done with greatest heed and the greatest solemnity. And how shall that officer appear before the Lord at the last day, who through ignorance knows not, or through carelessness or custom regards not, the rules of Christ in either of them?'

Let our comfort be in the assured presence of Christ, and in looking to him for wisdom, and faithfulness, and love.

Having thus noticed the office of the ministry, we proceed to consider THE NATURE OF THAT PRESENCE, which still continues with his church, and to which we may

especially look in every administration of his word and of baptism.

It is manifest that it is not a bodily presence. His body, with all the living characters of humanity ; the very same body in which He was crucified, with the marks of the nails and of the spear, with flesh and bones as we have (Luke xxiv. 39), ascended up to heaven. In this body He is now absent from earth, and though He will not be absent always, nor long, but shall soon come again (and much sooner than most think), to judge the quick and the dead : but with this body, as our forerunner, He for us entered within the vail (Heb. vi. 19, 20), having gone into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. ix. 24), and there ever living to make intercession for us.

And it is a distinct blessing from that glorious presence, which, as God, Christ has everywhere, as we have already seen. John i. 18 : iii. 13. In this view, He is with every human being ; " In him we live, move, and have our being ; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist," Col. i. 16, 17.

The presence specially intended in this promise is A MANIFESTED PRESENCE, full of power, grace, and blessing. The Holy Ghost is the great communicator of this presence. This is according to the promise : " I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." Thus the Holy Ghost supplies the place of Christ ; and " he shall not speak of himself," but, in the words of our Redeemer, " He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine ; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it to you." Here is that spiritual, lively, life-giving presence of Christ, which is peculiar to his people. " How is it,"

asks Jude, "that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world: Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 22, 23. There is then a real presence of Christ with his disciples, and a real fellowship which they have with him.

The subject is so full of blessedness and glory, that we may well here enlarge upon it by considering the blessings which the presence of the Redeemer brings. Where Christ is, there is the rich store of all mercies, there are the treasures of grace, which are in him for our use. In the case of a large family, at the head of which is a wise, wealthy, powerful, righteous, and affectionate Father, his very presence is a blessing: his instruction, his experience, his affection, make the happiness of the family circle. This may illustrate to us something of the blessedness of having him with us, who is the source of every excellence in all others, and who really dwells with and in his people. His treasures are exhaustless.

These blessings are set before us in the scriptures in a thousand different forms. Every good in nature, and Providence, and in social economy, is applied with exhaustless fulness and wisdom to display the riches of grace treasured up in Christ for our use. We might regard these treasures simply in the offices which our Saviour sustains, and how varied and comprehensive they are. The principal offices, prophet, priest, and king, were distinguished by men being set apart for them through anointing, and to these our primary attention is called by the very name of Christ. In addition to these, those most commonly dwelt upon in the scriptures are Mediator, Lord, Son of God, Word, Redeemer, and Saviour. But indeed he is all in all. When we have our Lord Christ with us, we have all that is beneficial in every thing else with us. Every good to be seen in any form of love in man, is to be seen in perfection only in our Divine Lord.

Where Christ is, there is OVERFLOWING GRACE. He is

full of grace, that is, full of favour, kindness, and tenderness to us his unworthy people. If He, the very mercy-seat, and the very throne of grace, is with us, how full and ever flowing must be those streams of grace which make glad the city of our God, for the use of all who apply to him. This grace brings salvation to all men. Titus ii. 11. O that none rejected it! This grace abounds over all sin. Rom. v. 20. O that none received it in vain! 2 Cor. vi. 1. This grace is sufficient for us in every extremity. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Let us prize it above every thing. Let us abide in Jesus, that in all its overflowing blessings this grace may be imparted to us.

Where Christ is, there is FULNESS OF TRUTH. He is described as "full of truth." He says, "I am the truth." And indeed, once realize the only-begotten Son of the Most High God, incarnate in our nature, suffering extreme agony, and dying as a malefactor on the tree for our sins, rising again from the dead, ascending to heaven in our very form, and there living for us, speedily to return as our everlasting Saviour and King, and what truths are not included in this! How it displays the wisdom, righteousness, holiness, purity, compassion, mercy, grace, in short, the every perfection of our God. As he is kept out of sight, all truth is veiled and hidden; as He is made prominent according to the scriptural fulness, all truth is clear and conspicuous. Here is the truth of all the types and shadows of the law of Moses—"Christ is the substance." Here is the goodness of all goodness. Whatever there is good and glorious in the face of creation, it is only a picture of a part of that goodness which is in its fulness in our blessed Redeemer. The sun, the light, the air, the waters, bread, and meat, and drink, the vine, and every other good we enjoy, only pourtray parts of his sufficiency. Whatever there is excellent in works of art may also lead us to him; He our clothing, he our crown, he our all and in all.

Where Christ is, there is PREVAILING INTERCESSION WITH THE FATHER. There is a remarkable connection

implied by our Lord between his presence with the assemblies of his people and the answer of prayer. "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done of my Father which is in heaven." For (observe the reason of prayer being heard) "for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He is there as the high priest offering much incense, with the prayers of all saints, so that they may ascend up acceptable before God. Rev. viii. 3, 4. He is there as the beloved Son, in whom his Father is always well pleased, ever living to make intercession for us, and thus obtaining for us mercy and grace. By this mediation we are accepted in the Beloved; through this presence and intercession, power is given to the ordinances of God, and our services, feeble and sinful as they are, yet are acceptable through him.

Where Christ is, there is RESTORED COMMUNION WITH GOD. Very rich and gracious are the promises to Israel. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." (Exod. xx. 24.) And in the more full and explicit promise, "Thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee, and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the Cherubims, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel," Exod. xxv. 21, 22. Christ is now this mercy-seat, (ιλαστηριον, compare Rom. iii. 25; Heb. ix. 5;) where God meets with his people, and communes with them. No possible way is there for our access unto God but by him, (John xiv. 6.) and through him there is free, immediate, confiding, and child-like access to the Father for every human being. He is, as it were, an elder brother, who, full of love to his offending brethren, rejoices in taking them back into his Father's presence; his conduct being altogether in contrast to the elder brother of the prodigal; he has no higher joy than to be the very door and way of our return to our God.

Where Christ is, there is FULL BLESSEDNESS. Blessedness for this life; (1 Tim. iv. 8.) for by Christ "all things work for our good;" (Rom. viii. 28.) every thing is made ours, even of things present; (1 Cor. iii. 22.) so that we have exactly those earthly and temporal benefits which are most suited for our best good and greatest usefulness. Blessedness in spiritual things: for all these are freely given to us in Christ Jesus, (Ephes. i. 3—12; 1 Peter i. 3—5.) so that everything is divinely appointed for the believer's highest spiritual welfare; and even our sinfulness, though most vile and base, and to be abhorred with intense hatred by every child of God, is yet made the occasion of deeper humility and more ardent gratitude. Blessedness for eternity is ours also with Christ. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; and he that hath the Son hath life."

Thus in having the Head of the Family with us, we have all his riches, wisdom, power, love, possessions, dominion, blessing, and glory; and that for ever. Were there nothing in baptism but our Lord's connecting it as he has done with his presence, oh how grateful ought we to be for this ordinance!

May the Lord himself open the eyes of our understanding, and give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; may our hearts welcome all his love; but the treasures of that love can never be told: they will enrich us, and gladden us through eternity.

Look, then, Christian reader, at baptism as a manifestation of Christ's presence. There you see the minister of Christ, the steward of his mysteries, as his ambassador, coming in his name and adopting the baptized into his family on earth, and in his name assuring to that baptized his grace and loving-kindness. The visible scene is deeply interesting. But if we realize what is invisible, what a scene it is! Angels are present; for they are "ministering spirits, ministering to the heirs of salvation:" and with regard to infants, we are specially assured by our Lord in heaven, "their angels do always behold the face of my

Father which is in heaven." But the Lord of angels, too, is there. Jesus himself "walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks," approving the work of Christian parents and ministers, and himself as it were again "taking the little ones in his arms, putting his hands upon them and blessing them." What a scene of spiritual glory is here! The Lord grant that it may cease in Christian lands to be longer profaned by awful formality, levity, and unbelief!

But how can we enter into this presence? how can we make it a reality? Though Christ be really present, how few feel and enjoy it, how few even know or perceive it! By what eye may he be seen? by what ear may He be heard?

It is by FAITH that we realize and enter into the presence of Christ, and hear his voice in his word read and preached, in his ordinances and sacraments. Faith gives substance and evidence to this presence. The power of faith to discern what is invisible to the eye of sense has been experienced by every believer. "We live not by sight but by faith." See Moses not fearing the wrath of the King of Egypt, though wholly dependent, in human estimation, upon him. What made him firm and stedfast? "he endured as seeing him who is invisible." What made Abraham rise up early, and patiently proceed day by day to Mount Moriah, and there offer up Isaac? he had full confidence in the promises of God. Faith gives us eyes to discern the things afar off, and full persuasion of them. "Looking unto Jesus" is but another description of the faith by which we enter into his presence.

But HOPE follows faith; anticipating all the glory yet to come; fixing herself "as an anchor within the vail—where the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Hope sees all that he is now doing, and all that he is preparing and speedily coming to do. Hope sees through the regeneration of which baptism is the sign and means, that regeneration and restitution of all things which is speedily coming on, and thus raises the soul above the world, and enables us to live in the atmosphere of heaven, in the very

presence of the Saviour and his coming kingdom, "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

And LOVE, last of all and greatest of all, enjoys this presence now while it faints and longs for its fuller manifestation. Thus speaks the Apostle Peter. After noticing the future "appearing of Jesus Christ," he goes on, "whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Love delights itself in the truth, that he is now really with us, and seeks every opportunity of meeting the beloved object: coming to an ordinance full of expectation to find Christ, and to meet him whom our soul loves. Oh does not our weariness in worship sadly prove we have not, by faith, hope, and love, met there with Him, who is the light and glory and joy of all Christian assemblies?

Let us also look for a moment at that glorious kingdom which is hastening on, where the visible and spiritual presence in their united and combined blessedness will be realized. That which was the peculiar blessedness of Moses, (Deut. xxxiv. 10.) that "the Lord spake unto him face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend." Exod. xxxiii. 11. And that which was the distinguishing privilege of Israel, that the tabernacle of God was among them, and he dwelt in Zion: will be joined with that also which was the high enjoyment of St. Paul, "to me to live is Christ;" (Phil. i. 21; 2 Cor. v. 16, 17.) or of St. John, "our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ;" and for ever we shall enjoy the visible and spiritual glory of our God and Saviour. Nothing is more clear than that we shall see him "face to face." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Nothing is more plainly promised than that in "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"—a great voice shall be heard out of heaven, saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God." Rev. xxi. 3. Let us look for more than a figurative millennium;

let us hope for a millennium having full streams of good connected with the realizing of the second table of the Law in family and social blessedness, and one in which "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together:" and thus the realizing the first table too, in the presence of the fountain-head of all blessings, to be manifested in a glory yet unconceivable, and with a largeness of blessing far beyond our present capabilities of knowing. May our affections be there fixed, may our eyes be ever regarding that glorious hope, through all earthly and even present spiritual blessings, looking onward to the things which are not seen and are eternal.

The promise closes so emphatically with "Amen," that I am led to add a few words on that seal of the whole. It is introduced with a special call to attention, Lo, (ἰδου, behold) though I am leaving you, yet regard attentively what I say, I will be really present with you; and it is closed with a solemn assurance of its truth.

This Amen may be viewed as THE VOICE OF CHRIST, and then it speaks his delight in being with us, and its certainty. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills existed, while as yet the earth was unmade and the heavens unprepared, he loved our fallen race, and anticipating our creation, was "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth," and his "delights were with the sons of men." The same joy he has still; "I will never leave you, I will never forsake you," is his rich promise; and the words "always, to the end of the world," correspond to this. Had it been only "always," it might have been confined to the apostles; had he said only "to the end of the world," we should have lost the full assurance of the constancy of the blessing. The union of both combines all we need.

This Amen may be viewed as THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT. He speaks by the word, which was all indited by him; and he thus puts his seal of concurrence and confirmation to his presence now with his people, as he does to his future return, when he says, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come. The love of the

Spirit " is a delightful though little considered part of divine truth. HE speaks not of himself, but WE should not forget all his grace, but have real " communion with the Holy Ghost."

This Amen may also be viewed as THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH,—language put into our mouths, as in the Psalms and the prophets, by the Spirit of God ; and according to the twofold meaning of Amen, it is the language of faith, saying in full triumph, assuredly IT IS so ; Jesus is with his church now and always ; and it is the language of desire ; Amen, so BE IT. May we and all men everywhere partake of this experience, and fully enjoy this incomparable blessing.

CHAPTER V.

THE BENEFITS DESIGNED TO BE GIVEN IN BAPTISM.

We are so encompassed with flesh, and surrounded on every side with sensible things, that it is hard and difficult for us to realize and constantly raise the mind to invisible and spiritual objects, though of infinitely superior importance, and most directly connected with our highest and eternal good.

To remedy this infirmity of our nature, and to make the sensible and visible objects themselves means of raising our minds to those spiritual and heavenly things, to enjoy which for ever is the great end of our being, God has given us his word, shewing us the spiritual meaning of earthly things, and making them the very steps to communion with God and to the enjoyment of his presence and love.

The Living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was in heaven while on earth (John iii. 13.) and lived by the Father (John vi. 57.) has shewn us how to connect heaven and earth together, and has left us a glorious example of doing the will of God on earth as it is in heaven.

God has farther given men ministers, sending them through the earth to proclaim every where the good tidings of his love to sinful men, and to call them back from earthly to heavenly things, from alienation of mind and aversion of heart, to be reconciled to God, in every thing seeing his love, and delighting in him.

Thus, those things which are so widely present on the face of all creation as to be visible and sensible to all men,

as well as the events of a constant providence, become like a second Bible, pregnant with lessons of grace indelibly engraven on earthly things. Every birth becomes a symbol of the new birth of the soul ; every death, with all its distressing horrors of a stiffened, insensible, motionless body, sinking speedily into corruption, shews forth the state of a soul dead in trespasses and sins. The air by which our daily life is sustained, inhaled and exhaled every momeut, teaches us how spiritual life is maintained by the continual prayer of faith receiving the Spirit of God, and the constant return of praise and thanksgiving. The water by which we are continually refreshed or cleansed, teaches us how the divine Spirit acts upon our souls. Every seed-time followed by the spring, the summer, and the autumn, proclaims to every listening ear of faith and love the precious doctrine of the resurrection, and the future —the coming glory of the children of God. While God has, at present, veiled himself from us, so that his title is, " Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself," and we have still to address him—" Our Father which art in heaven," he has surrounded us on every side with tokens of his real presence and unfailing love. We may read his name in every flower that grows, and in every star that shines ; the whole earth is full of his grace and goodness ; and the time is coming when it shall again, in visible glory, be his tabernacle, and our Father will be on earth as he is in heaven. Rev. xxi. 1—3.

Nor is his love content with these methods of instruction. He has instituted VISIBLE SACRAMENTS, taking the very materials of our earth, and out of them exhibiting and preaching his loving-kindness to men, by a direct, and individual, and immediate application ; first, as in baptism, to the outward frame of man ; and then, as in the Lord's Supper, to his inward frame ; teaching deeper and fuller lessons of his grace to us, and manifesting his design to bring us into the closest union and most intimate communion with himself.

By the ministry of his word there is a proclamation

made in the hearing of all men, of the gospel of the grace of God, and of all those truths which belong to the salvation of men. But things merely heard are more liable to be let slip and to pass away. By the sacraments of the church a more manifest and visible stamp of Christianity is affixed to the history of the world.

By the ordinance of baptism to be administered to all nations, and in professedly Christian lands administered to most even from infancy, the whole of Christianity becomes embodied in the history of the world ; every human being is justly claimed by his Creator, the Lord of all, from his infancy, and promised blessings, incalculable and eternal, on his faithfulness. The fulness of the divine love is brought home to every soul, and cannot be lost but in the wilful rejection of that love.

That his sacraments might be perpetually observed and we might receive inestimable spiritual advantages, it has pleased our merciful Saviour to make them EFFECTUAL MEANS OF GRACE TO THE BELIEVER ; and to guard against their perversion, the very means used are most significant and striking figures and representations of the heavenly blessings intended to be conveyed. Thus in the Lord's Supper, partaking of food is the lively representation of our needy and perishing state, and of feeding on Christ in our heart by faith, for our spiritual strength and refreshment ; and in baptism, the washing of water is the lively representation of our defilement, and of purification from sin, pointing out thus, the real benefits to be obtained in these sacraments.

That we may have a clearer view of the benefits of baptism, let us first see THE GRACE GIVEN BEFORE BAPTISM. The holy scriptures point out repentance and faith, (Acts ii. 38, 39. Mark xvi. 16. Acts xviii. 18.) as requisite in adults, and the promises to the children of believers as the ground of infant baptism. Acts ii. 39. The free promise in God's covenant, to the believer's seed ; (Gen. xvii. 7.) and repentance whereby men forsake sin, and faith whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them

in that sacrament, are gifts previously bestowed on the baptized. Thus we enter into the kingdom of God in spirit and belong to it spiritually before baptism. There is a commencement of spiritual blessedness before it is publicly attested in the church.

At the time WE ARE ACTUALLY BAPTIZED, the act of baptism gives us A CHANGE OF STATE, an entrance into the church of God, and a new standing with relation to our fellow-men. We have a new place in the thoughts and prayers of the church, and a new aspect in the eyes of men. We are acknowledged to be "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." Ephes. ii. 19. We see this in the case of the apostle Paul: the scales had been removed from his eyes; he had been converted to God. It was true previously—"Behold, he prayeth!" But he had not been joined outwardly to the church, and therefore Ananias is sent to bid him, "Arise now and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. 16. And when the disciples at Jerusalem believed not that he was a disciple, Barnabas soon removed all doubt from their minds, and he was received as a member of the Christian church. Thus there is in baptism the confirmation of faith, the assurance of pardon, and the admission into the privileges of the church of God, including its prayers, special interest, and love.

The general benefit of baptism to all Christians is thus stated by Archbishop Usher. It is "the same as was the benefit to the Jew outward;" (Rom. ii. 28; iii. 1, 2,) "there is a general grace of baptism which all the baptized partake of as a common favour, and that is their admission into the visible body of the church, their matriculation and outward incorporating into the number of the worshippers of God by external communion. And so as circumcision was not only a seal of the righteousness which is by faith, but, as an overplus, God appointed it to be a wall of separation between the Jew and the Gentile; so is baptism a badge of an outward member of the church, a distinction

from the common rout of heathen, and God thereby seals a right upon the party baptized to his ordinance, that he may use them as his privileges, and wait for an inward blessing by them. Yet this is but the porch, the shell, and outside; all that are outwardly received into the visible church are not spiritually ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ. Baptism always is attended upon by that general grace, but not always by that special.

Union to the Church of Christ is, then, the direct benefit of baptism. St. Paul declares this truth when he gives that rich and striking figure of the oneness of the church of Christ, by comparing it at length to the human body. "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 13. Our church thus expresses it, "they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church." Christ is the vine, and professing Christians are the branches of his visible church. All that are baptized with water are admitted into that church. But if men, loving their sins, neglect Christ, they abide not in him, and receive not the indwelling grace of his Spirit, and thus become worthless branches. In the words of Jewell, "The general outward church of God is visible, and may be seen; but the very true church of God's elect is invisible, and cannot be seen or discerned by man, but is only known by God alone." To be admitted into the visible church of Christ is to be placed amidst the means of grace and the prayers of God's people. Those who really believe are truly grafted into Christ, and bear fruit. St. Paul thus states it to the Galatians, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." This statement is the foundation of the parallel statement in our Catechism, that we were in our

baptism made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. The expressions of the Catechism follow those of the apostle. The titles, members of Christ's body, children of God, and heirs according to the promise, are by St. Paul connected with baptism in the same manner as in the Catechism, and the solution of the apostle's words will be the solution of those of the Catechism.* And if we have doubt of any, let us remember that St. Paul had the same doubt, (Gal. iv. 19, 20,) and yet hesitated not to make the universal statement, "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." It was never intended to be expressed that the outward administration of baptism by the rightly ordained minister should produce these inestimable benefits, without reference to the grace of God and the right reception of the ordinance. This were to exalt baptism at the expense of the Lord of baptism, and the sovereignty and freedom of his grace, and to give unscriptural honour to man. The sacrament gives the title, but faith, the work of the Spirit, gives the possession itself. The baptism of the Spirit, which may be quite separate and distinct from the baptism with water, (Acts viii. 21,) is alone efficacious for this great end. We say of those baptized, they are in baptism made members of Christ, in that judgment of faith, hope, and charity, which is the very character of Christianity, and according to that fulness of God's love which the ordinance is intended to set forth. Assured that baptism with the Spirit is accompanied by these blessings,† hearing the prayers offered up, and in the judgment of a true charity believing

* A fuller explanation of this part of the Catechism will be afterwards given. There is clear scriptural example of each term, as applied to those who yet proved in the result not to reap the designed blessing: *members of Christ*, John xv. 1, 6; child of God, Isaiah i. 2, 10; inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xiii. 41, 42. Heb. xii. 16, 17.

† It must be remembered, that in the latter part of the Catechism, the learner is expressly taught there are two parts in the Sacrament of baptism —the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace; the baptism with water, and the death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. Let the term baptism be seen to comprehend both parts, and both parts to be assured to our children in the promises of God, and the answer in the earlier part of the Catechism will not only be clear from objection, but give a rich and precious view of the believer's assurance of the spiritual blessedness of his children, and lead the child to the same view of God's loving-kindness.

they are true prayers, we believe that God has given the baptism of the Spirit, and speak accordingly. With respect to infants, we have no right to make any exceptions; the blessings of the gospel are bestowed freely, and expressly promised in God's gracious covenant to the children of believers. With respect to adults we are bound in the same charity, till their conduct compel us to think otherwise, to hope thus well of them. St. Paul says of the kindred rite of circumcision, "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." So we may say of baptism; if thou repent of sin, and believe in Christ, thy baptism profiteth; thou art united to his family, and wilt share their glory; but if thou despise all the grace and goodness of God, and neglect his great salvation, thy condemnation will be the more aggravated, and thy baptism will avail only to increase thy guilt. May we thus realize baptismal grace by walking worthy of our high calling. And O! how blessed it is when we realize our Christian privileges, to receive another member of the happy family by baptism, to acknowledge another fellow-citizen of the saints and of the household of God.

That which especially distinguishes Christian baptism, and is to be expected by the faith of the adult baptized, and the faith of the infant's parents and sponsors, is the enlarged GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST, in the season and in the measure wherein it shall please the Divine Lord who has appointed baptism, to bestow it. Jesus, the gift of God to man, is the bestower of this gift. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." John iv. 10. This is the well of water springing up into everlasting life, (iv. 14.) and flowing in ten thousand streams of blessedness. All other benefits may be traced up hither as to their springhead. Jesus claims it as his own office, and appoints baptism as his own rite for bestowing this unspeakable gift.

Well does Archbishop Whitgift observe, that the force

of baptism depends not upon man, but upon God. He also says, 'Certainly if the being of the sacrament depended upon man in any respect, we were but in a miserable case, since we should be always in doubt whether we were rightly baptized or no: but it is most true, that the force and strength of the sacrament is not in man, be he minister or not minister, be he good or evil, but in God himself, in his Spirit, in his free and effectual operation. And therefore saith St. Paul, what is Paul, what is Apollos? 1 Cor. iii.'

The gift of the Holy Ghost is joined in many places of the scripture with baptism. Thus John the Baptist explicitly, and more than once, testifies of Christ, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost," (Matt. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16,) and our Lord himself assured his apostles after his resurrection, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Acts i. 5. Hence we find, after exhorting the Jews to repent and be baptized, Peter assures them as a consequence of it, —"And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." In that day this gift was in many instances made palpable and obvious to all by its being accompanied with the power of working miracles, and speaking with tongues, (Acts viii. 13—20; x. 44—47; xix. 6,) but those graces which the three thousand received are the ordinary fruits of the Spirit, only in a blessed degree of fulness. Acts ii. 41—47. God has called baptism the laver of regeneration; and the apostle assured them, speaking of the gift of the Holy Ghost in baptism, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 39. Here is an ample foundation for our faith in this promise connected with baptism. According to our faith, the promise will be realized. If it be not communicated, man's unbelief and neglect of fervent prayer are the true cause of our failure; the blame is entirely man's. And on the other hand, if the Divine Spirit be communicated, the praise is wholly due to God: of whom cometh every good gift, and according to whose mercy is the washing of regeneration.

The sad inconsistency of the baptized, has made it needful to guard every part of doctrine on this blessed sacrament. The Puritan Cartwright had objected to Whitgift, that he made baptism, whereby only the family of God should enter into his house, to be a common passage for all. It is justly replied by Whitgift, and his reply meets the error of those who would over-exalt the benefits of baptism :—

'I must tell you, that I make the holy sacrament of baptism no other kind of passage than God himself hath made it, and the church of Christ hath ever held it. Good and evil, clean and unclean, holy and profane, must needs pass by it, except you will indeed in more ample and large manner tie the grace of God unto it, than ever did the Papists, and say that all that be baptized be also saved ; or else join with the Anabaptists in this, that after baptism a man cannot sin. Who can tell whether he be holy or unholy, good or evil, clean or unclean, elect or reprobate, of the household of the church or not of the church, that is baptized, be he infant, or at the years of discretion ?' *

* Hooker's remarks distinguishing the views of the Romanist and the Protestant, place the grace given in the sacrament, with his usual clearness, before the reader. They are given in an Appendix to Book V, by Mr. Keble. See vol. ii. p. 702.

" The schoolmen which follow *Thomas* do not only comprise in the name of justifying grace the favour of God, his Spirit, and effect of that favour and saving virtues, the effects of his Spirit, but over and besides these three a fourth kind of formal habit or inherent quality, which maketh the person of man acceptable, perfecteth the substance of his mind, and causeth the virtuous actions thereof to be meritorious. This grace they will have to be the principal effect of *sacraments*, a grace which neither Christ nor any apostle of Christ did ever mention. The fathers have it not in their writings, although they often speak of *sacraments* and of the grace we receive by them. Yea, they which have found it out are as doubtful as any other what name and nature they should give unto it ; besides, inasmuch as whatsoever doth belong to our spiritual perfection on earth, the same is complete in that grace which was first mentioned ; their new *scholastic* invention must needs be vain and unnecessary. Let it therefore suffice us to receive *sacraments* as sure pledges of God's favour, signs infallible that the hand of his saving mercy doth thereby reach forth itself towards us, sending the influence of his Spirit into men's hearts, which maketh them like to a rich soil, fertile with all kind of heavenly virtues, purgeth, justifieth, restoreth, the very dead unto life ; yea, raiseth even from the bottomless pit to place in thrones of everlasting joy.

" They pretend that to *sacraments* we ascribe no efficacy, but make them bare signs of instruction or admonition, which is utterly false. For SACRAMENTS WITH US ARE SIGNS EFFECTUAL ; THEY ARE THE INSTRUMENTS OF GOD, WHEREBY TO BESTOW GRACE, HOWBEIT GRACE NOT PROCEEDING FROM THE

THE BLESSINGS FOLLOWING BAPTISM, rightly received and improved, are all the blessings of the gospel, which may indeed be included in that one word, REGENERATION. Regeneration is not a mere instant act, but a life of principle, holiness and blessedness that never ends, having many parts and helps in all our Christian course: but the sole author of all its holiness and blessedness is God himself: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Regeneration in this comprehensive sense includes the whole spiritual life here, and the life of glory hereafter. This is so important a part of the doctrine of baptism, that its connection with it will be more distinctly and fully considered in subsequent chapters.

We may, however, here remark, that the chief grace or benefit intended to be set forth by baptism, and of which it is a means, is that gift of the Holy Ghost which consists in A DEATH UNTO SIN AND A NEW BIRTH UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS. On this, in the Epistles, the inspired writers dwell most frequently, and at considerable length. Baptism is the very token and sign that we are dead unto sin. "How shall we," asks St. Paul, "that are dead to sin, live any longer therein. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death; therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death,* that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness

VISIBLE SIGN, BUT FROM HIS INVISIBLE POWER. God by Sacraments giveth grace (saith Bernard), even as honours and dignities are given—an abbot made by receiving a staff, a doctor by a book, a bishop by a ring; because he that giveth these pre-eminences declareth by such signs his meaning, nor doth the receiver take the same but with effect; for which cause he is said to have the one by the other; albeit that which is bestowed proceeded wholly from the will of the giver, and not from the *efficacy* of the sign."

* It has been supposed there was an allusion made by the apostle to the mode of baptism by immersion, but this does not seem the apostle's primary intention. His reference is to our Lord Christ's death and burial, to which believers are conformed; and his resurrection, which is a type of our spiritual resurrection now, as well as the first fruits of that completed resurrection of the whole man for which we are hoping. The words which follow, *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed*, may shew that something far deeper than an outward resemblance to the mode of his death, burial and resurrection is intended.

of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." Rom. vi. 2—8. The statement in the Colossians is similar, ii. 11—13; iii. 1—3.

In this distinct and striking passage the apostle shews how spiritual regeneration is the very substance of a right reception of the gospel, and that the symbolical meaning of baptism is a plain and full declaration of the necessity and nature of this spiritual regeneration, and of God's readiness to give it fully and wholly to the baptized. In baptism we put on the whole Christ, the suffering Christ now, the glorified Christ hereafter: His death in our daily dying to sin; his resurrection in our daily living to God, and being raised up and "made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The all-comprehensive blessing thus included in baptism is OUR BEING SO BROUGHT THEREBY THROUGH FAITH INTO UNION WITH CHRIST AS TO SHARE ALL HE DID. Hence we should by faith regard all that Christ went through as gone through for us; and we, believing in him, are judicially regarded before God as having passed through all that he did. It does not appear to me that true faith in the apostle's statement, in the 6th of Romans, can rest in a meaning short of this: "So many of us" (observe here the universality, every individual without exception) "as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." A similar universality in a distributative individuality we have, Gal. iii. 27, "As many of you," &c. His suffering was ours, his lying in the grave was ours; his resurrection, acceptance, and freedom from farther punishment was ours; his welcome before the throne of God ours: his future glory ours; for "we are Christ's and Christ is God's. This is beautifully expressed in the original of 2 Cor. v. 14, "if one died for all, then were all dead." This is the blessing set before us by baptism, and in which

we express our faith by that ordinance. Let there be real faith in Jesus as thus made unto us of God all we need, and there is the true spring of all holy and heavenly affections. Baptism is our public incorporation and grafting into Christ before his church, and God's seal of our participation of these blessings. Wherever the parent has faith in the promises made to his children, or the adult faith in the promises made in the gospel, these promises are individually applied and enjoyed.

But while this is the main benefit connected with baptism, there are many other important truths and benefits thus set before us.

The benefits conveyed by baptism may farther be viewed in various lights. 1. THE DIVINE TRUTH WHICH IT SETS BEFORE US. The act of baptism, and the solemn sprinkling or washing of an infant in the face of a congregation, is to the eye what a sermon is to the ear—a preaching of the doctrines of God's word. Thus the doctrine of ORIGINAL SIN, "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth alway contrary to the Spirit,"* is clearly taught by the baptism of infants. Origen, writing in the beginning of the third century, in his Homily on Lev. ch. 12, says, "Let it be considered what is the reason, that whereas the baptism of the church is given for the forgiveness of sins, infants also are by the usage of the church baptized; when, if there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them." And again, on Luke xiv. he says, "None is free from pollution, though his life is but the length of one day upon earth, and it is for that reason, because by the sacrament of baptism the pollution of our birth is taken away, that infants are baptized."

* See Article IX. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is so clearly set forth in Baptism that it has by this ordinance been firmly maintained from age to age against all the heresies which have arisen in the Church of God.

The doctrine of THE NEED OF SPIRITUAL LIFE is also preached by baptism, in the figure by which it is illustrated (John iii. 5.) in the cleansing away of pollution by washing with water, and the newness and freshness thence given to that which was polluted. Thus Origen, on Matt. xix. 28, testifies, "according to the regeneration of the laver, every one that is born again of water and of the Spirit is clean from pollution; clean, as I may venture to say, in a glass and ænigma." We are thus taught that our souls need to be renewed and sanctified.

The doctrine OF THE FREE GRACE OF GOD is richly and abundantly exhibited also. He appoints the whole ordinance. He directs his ministers to disciple and baptize all nations. He appoints water as the emblem of his Spirit. He promises "It shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." Thus in baptism we have visibly set before our eyes this love and goodness of our heavenly Parent.

And the great advantage of this instruction is, it is obvious to the senses; it demands, by its peculiarity, publicity, and visible character, the consideration and the enquiry of all men. The unconverted, who have not spiritual eyes to discern its glory, are yet compelled to enquire what can be its meaning, and so gain lessons of spiritual instruction; while the church of Christ is taught inwardly, impressively, and repeatedly, the solemn and valuable lessons, which otherwise might slip from their memory.

Baptism is a CONTINUAL TESTIMONY TO the all-important doctrine of THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD. It derives its chief motive from the reality of that doctrine. There would be no use in baptism if there were no resurrection from the dead. As it was well worth while for the most suffering martyrs to go through all their bitter sufferings with this hope: so though men baptized have been continually subject to death, and have died and been buried, it was well worth while for fresh converts to come forward and enter into baptism, as fresh witnesses that they had not died in vain, but should yet rise to future glory. This

seems to be the leading meaning of the apostle, in his strong appeal, "What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" Υπερ των νεκρων in the short and powerful language of the apostle, seems to convey the idea, "as witnesses in behalf of the dead, that they would really rise;" thus he shews that the very entrance of converts into the Christian life, as well as the daily dangers endured by the most devoted apostles, all testified most distinctly to this great and fundamental doctrine.* Nor is it merely lessons of instruction but divinely appointed means of grace, communicating, through union with the Saviour, as it pleases the Spirit of God to work, in answer to the faith and prayer of his people, the grace of God to the baptized. This distinguishes, indeed, all divinely-appointed means of our salvation. God has graciously given them, as steps by Christ to himself, means of removing hindrances that separate us from God, and supplying channels in which the grace of his Holy Spirit may flow to us. Nor can we ever conceive of their being vain and empty, where the faith and prayer of his people lay hold of his promises in the due use of them.†

* Bingham gives the following statement of the views of the principal fathers, which substantially agrees with the above account. "Chrysostom supposes the apostle to refer to the Catholic custom of making every catechumen at his baptism, with his own mouth, declare his belief of the resurrection of the dead, by repeating the creed, of which that was a part, and so being baptized into that faith or hope of the resurrection of the dead. And therefore he puts them in mind of this, saying, If there be no resurrection of the dead, why art thou then baptized for the dead, that is the body? For therefore thou art baptized for the dead, believing the resurrection of the dead, that the body may not remain dead but revive again. So that baptizing for the dead is an elliptical expression for being baptized into the faith or belief of the resurrection of the dead. And so I think Tertullian is to be understood, when he says, in opposition to the error of the Marcionites, that "to be baptized for the dead is to be baptized for the body, which is declared to be dead by baptism: that is, we are baptized into the belief of the resurrection of the body, both whose death and resurrection are represented in baptism." And the interpretation of Epiphanius comes pretty near these, when he says, "It refers to those who were baptized upon the approach of death, in hopes of the resurrection from the dead; for they shewed thereby, that the dead should rise again, and that therefore they had need of the remission of sins, which is obtained in baptism.' The same sense is given by Theodoret and Theophylact, and Balsamon and Zonaras, and Matthew Blastares among the Greeks; and it is embraced by Bishop Patrick and Dr. Hammond, as the most natural and genuine exposition of this difficult passage of the apostle.

† Mr. Maurice has ably shewn the ground of harmony and fulness of truth,

2. Remission of sins is a special blessing connected in the holy scriptures with baptism. Thus St. Peter, in his first public address to the Jews, charges them ; " Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Acts ii. 38. The address of Ananias to Saul on his conversion, conveys a similar truth : " Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. 16. While the uncleanness of the body is removed by water, the sins of the soul are washed away in a free forgiveness.

To understand this more distinctly, let us remember, there is free forgiveness of all sins through the blood of Christ. " God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." To enter into this amazing love of God by lively faith is true happiness, and the root of true holiness ; " Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." On which passage the apostle proves the blessedness of him that believeth. Rom. iv. 4—9. Baptism is the sign, the means, and the pledge of this forgiveness, and a real help to assure our souls of it. The outward washing of water does not cleanse the soul. Christ only, by his own blood, washes away our sins (Rev. i. 5) ; and the Holy Ghost applying this, or, to use the figures of scripture, sprinkling his blood on the conscience, purges it (John xvi. 14, 15. Heb. ix. 14 ; xii. 24), and makes it pure and clean before God. In baptism this is, by the direction of God, both brought before us,

in the respective views of high-churchmen and the evangelical school. " The high-churchman declares the origin and ground of our salvation to be in the will of God ; the evangelical believes the order and method to be our being constituted and redeemed in Christ. The one says, God has chosen and adopted you to be his sons ; the other, God has chosen and adopted you to be his sons in Christ. The one lays the foundation of a universal family ; the other gives the foundation on which the faith and life of each member of the family is to rest as he grows to man's estate. The one shews the perfect freeness of God's grace ; the other, that grace in its proper sense can only appertain to a spiritual creature. Take the first principle without the second, and the church sinks into the world, as it did under the Popedom ; take the second principle without the first, and the church sinks into a sect or a body of sects, as it has been inclined to do since the Reformation."

and represented to us for the confirmation of our faith ; through it also, as a divinely-appointed means, forgiveness is assured to our faith. It is a personal individual application of the general proclamation of God's love, enabling the believer to feel and to say, " We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Ephes. i. 7.

3. The SEAL OF ASSURANCE OF A PERSONAL SHARE IN THE COVENANT OF GOD'S LOVE is hereby given. Circumcision is called the covenant which the Jews were to keep (Gen. xvii. 10), and " the seal of the righteousness of his faith," which Abraham received from God (Rom. iv. 11) ; and baptism stands to us in the place of circumcision. Col. ii. 11, 12. Faith lays hold of this testimony, and realizes it, so that the assurance of hope is imparted to us. Those who know how feeble our faith is, and what helps it wants for all its arduous conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil, will not think lightly of so great a help to faith. It gives, under the divine direction, that which is a personal title and warrant of the privileges of the gospel. It is a pledge of God's entire willingness and gracious desire to bestow on us his Holy Spirit, and to renew our souls unto holiness. When God has provided a special ordinance for my individual introduction into his visible church, I have additional and personal ground afforded me that He loves me, and would not that I should perish, but that I should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. However, through neglect or unbelief, this benefit may be disregarded, let faith realise God's love to us, and it will be found to be a real benefit. The covenant made with the whole Israelitish nation at Mount Sinai was real, and though many perished in the wilderness through unbelief, it was proclaimed and made known for the benefit of all.

But it may be said, Is it not the special office of the Holy Ghost to assure our hearts before God ? Are we not by him " sealed unto the day of redemption ?" Undoubtedly. And yet Abraham " received," the apostle tells us, " the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the

faith which he had yet being uncircumcised," Rom. iv. 11. The distinction is well explained by our Reformers, in Nowell's Catechism, thus, 'To lighten and give bright clearness to men's minds and souls, and to make their conscience quiet and in security, as they be indeed, so ought they to be accounted the proper work of the Holy Ghost alone, and to be imputed to him, and this praise is not to be transferred to another. But this is no impediment but that God may give to his mysteries the second place in quieting and establishing our minds and consciences, but yet so that nothing be abated from the virtue of his Spirit; wherefore we must determine that the outward element hath neither of itself nor in itself inclosed the force and efficacy of the sacrament, but that the same wholly floweth from the Spirit of God, as out of a spring-head, and is, by the divine mysteries which are ordained by the Lord for this end, conveyed to us.'

4. Baptism is A CONFESSION OF CHRIST BEFORE MEN. Thoughts and affections are hidden, words are more liable to dissimulation (James ii. 14); open actions, especially in things peculiar to the gospel, and having no meaning but on gospel principles, are more certain and unequivocal marks and proofs of our profession. They bear witness of our faith before men; they plainly shew that we are not ashamed of Christ and his gospel. This was very manifest in the early days of Christianity. It is in a measure still the case, as baptism is attended to conscientiously and consistently, and not formally, and merely because it is the practice of our country. The benefit of an open confession of Christ is great, spiritually for our souls here, and eternally in his visible kingdom of glory hereafter.

5. The ordinance of baptism places ALL OUR OBEDIENCE ON EVANGELICAL MOTIVES. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have also put on Christ." It is God's act of love, after he had led us to receive his truth. The murderers of our Lord (Acts ii. 37.) are no sooner pricked in their hearts with a sense of their sins, and gladly receive the word, than they are immediately baptized, and

admitted into the full privileges of the gospel, as we have been stating them. The plan of the gospel is, by the overpowering riches of grace and love, to subdue the heart to God. It shews us what God has done for us, when it calls us to give up our hearts to him. We must be justified freely, that we may bring forth good works. Baptism, with a joyful sound, comes to the heart of the believer, and tells him, You are cleansed by Christ's blood, you are made members of his body, children of God, and heirs of his glory, and now, in the strength of his grace, and with faith in his promises, "go and sin no more, go and tell thy friends what great things the Lord hath done for thee." It is the divine impression of those truths.—"We love him because he first loved us. I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." The value of infant baptism is great in this view. It places our children on the vantage-ground of God's covenanted love. It gives us the privilege of bringing them up as his children. Being baptized, we have a fresh plea for their devoting their earliest days to God. The spirit of adoption ought to be through faith the daily enjoyment of God's baptized ones; and we may with sweet confidence and earnestness, affection and joy, bid them look at their baptismal privileges and engagements, and call them to be followers of God as dear children.

6. It is lastly, as an appointed ordinance, a means of great MORAL INFLUENCE. Not only are great truths there set before us with peculiar impressiveness, but a sacred relation is there taken up towards God our Father, Jesus our Saviour, and the Holy Spirit our Comforter. All the offices which the triune Jehovah did in such love and condescension engage to fulfil for man, are there assured to us, in being baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And we also engage and vow to conform ourselves to this gracious purpose of God, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to believe and live according to the word of God. The public mani-

festation of such truths before the church, and the recollection of such vows, are spiritual benefits, strengthening and confirming our souls in time of temptation. They furnish a strong ground of appeal in the Christian ministry. I am no longer in the situation of an indifferent person. By the piety, wisdom, and love of my Christian parents, the first step has been taken in my dedication to God; renunciation of my hope in Christ would be the real character of my disowning it. God anticipates me with his love, and before I can know the evil of my springing from sinful parents, prepares for me the assurance of his grace and love, providing me the means of a new nature and a heavenly kingdom.

It is clear from what has been said, that all those blessings of which we have been speaking, are not received by all who are baptized. "Sacraments by resemblance represent, by institution signify, and by the power of Christ they sanctify," or as Cyprian puts it "the Spirit only confers the grace of the sacrament."

It is too evident that really saving grace is not received by every baptized person. We see, especially in the apostacy of these last days, the chief proportion of those who are baptized, growing up in sin, and living afar off from God: the wickedness of man thus rejecting the loving-kindness of God. Nor are we to conceive, that to those thus living in sin, and continuing such an evil course, baptism has availed for their benefit. The apostle is express—"In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision," (a truth connected, in different places, with three different practical conclusions, that we may be effectually guarded against so soul-destructive an error, as resting in the outward form, 2 Tim. iii. 5.) "but a new creature" (Gal. vi. 15), "but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6.,), "but the keeping of the commandments of God." 1 Cor. vii. 19.

But on the other hand, we have no right to expect the thing signified, if we neglect God's appointed sign and means. Let us not "be wise above that which is written"

(το μη υπερ ὁ γεγραπται φρονειν. 1 Cor. iv. 6.) or seek to separate what God has joined together.

Baptism then really represents our receiving Christ in all that to which he calls us, and which is summed up in our dying to sin, and rising with him. And it does more than represent, it really conveys it, not by virtue of the outward act to the unbelieving,—but to the eye, the ear, and the hand of faith, which really receives the blessing.

Consider the goodness of God in providing so many benefits and blessings for us. He might have left us to perish in our rebellion. But he has a father's heart towards us, and thinks with compassion of his prodigal children afar off. And he has "instituted and ordained this holy mystery" to teach us the great lessons of our free salvation, to apply to us personally the rich blessings which he has provided, to be a pledge of his love, and to instruct us in the high and holy privileges and duties in which he calls us to walk. Well may we magnify his great name, and continually show forth his praises. Let us not lose sight of the things taught us, but keep them in our memory that we may be saved.

And on the other hand, let us beware of over-valuing or resting in the outward right. Remembering the wise caution of St. Bernard,* "The fashion is to deliver a ring, when seizing and possession of inheritance is given ; the ring is a sign of possession, so that he which takes it may say, "The ring is nothing, I care not for it ; it is the inheritance that I sought for." In like manner, when Christ our Lord drew nigh to his passion, he thought good to give seizing and possession of his grace to his disciples, and that they might receive his invisible grace by some visible sign : for this end all sacraments are instituted."

I would close this important part of the subject of baptism, with one remark by a pious non-conformist, on the benefit received through the outward right, and with another, by a pious archbishop, on the need of faith.

Matthew Henry thus testifies his sense of the benefits of

* Sermon de Cœnâ Dom.

his own early baptism. "For my own part I cannot but take this occasion to express my gratitude to God for my infant baptism, not only as it was an early admission into the visible body of Christ, but as it furnished my pious parents with a good argument (and, I trust, through grace, a prevailing argument) for an early dedication of myself to God in my childhood. If God has wrought any good work upon my soul, I desire with humble thankfulness to acknowledge the moral influence of my baptism upon it."

On the need of faith, Archbishop Usher says, "As baptism, administered to those of years, is not effectual unless they believe; so we can make no comfortable use of our baptism administered in our infancy until we believe. The righteousness of Christ, and all the promises of grace, were in my baptism estated upon me, and sealed unto me on God's part; but then I come to have the profit and benefit of them, when I come to understand what grant God in baptism hath sealed unto me, and actually to lay hold upon it by faith."

CHAPTER VI.

ADULT BAPTISM AND ITS RIGHT RECEPTION.

THE subjects of baptism in the New Testament were, in the providence of God, at the commencement of Christianity, not ordinarily of the same age as the subjects of baptism where Christianity is nationally received. The instances of baptism which we have brought before us in the New Testament are chiefly those of grown-up persons, come to full age: we say chiefly, because, as it will be seen afterwards, there are intimations, at least, of the baptism of younger members of a household. It will be conformable, then to the providence of God, and tend to clear our way to the scriptural view of baptism, and its right reception, to consider first the case of grown-up persons.

When Christianity became generally established, infant baptism became almost universal; indeed the practice of infant baptism had become so general, that the church of England provided, at the Reformation, no office for the baptism of adults. It was only found to be necessary after the time of the Commonwealth, when, amidst the various disorders of those days, the Baptists and Quakers had so multiplied, that it became desirable to have a distinct service for adults.

A little reflection will fully account for the subjects of baptism in the early days of Christianity being chiefly adults. It is the natural and obvious result of the first propagation of Christianity. The gospel addresses itself to the understanding, consciences, and affections of men, and wins its

mighty way over all their sins and all their prejudices. Its first converts in a new country are those who can form a judgment of its claims, and yield an intelligent submission to them. Hence our Lord, on one occasion of his mentioning baptism, speaks of faith as a first requisite; "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved;" while, on the other occasion, he merely requires discipleship, or being brought into his school.

We will first notice SOME EXAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

The DAY OF PENTECOST was marked by the first outpouring of the Spirit, and the largest introduction by baptism, at one time, of fresh members into the Church of Christ. There had been considerable previous preparation. The ministry of John the Baptist, and of our Lord and his disciples, had occupied several years. The miracles accompanying our Saviour's death and resurrection, as well as the miracles of the day of Pentecost, must have tended to prepare the people's minds to receive the wonderful fact that the crucified One was indeed the Messiah. The discourse of Peter therefore produced a deep impression; "when they heard it, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They were exhorted to repent and be baptized, "and then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." We see here repentance and faith preparing the minds of the converts for baptism. We next read of another call to repentance, (Acts iii. 19,) and "many of those which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand:" and soon afterwards we read, "Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

When the gospel spread to Samaria, Philip went down and preached Christ unto them; and it is said, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were

baptized, both men and women." At this time occurred that remarkable baptism of Simon Magus, which is conclusive that there may be an outward ordinance, rightly administered, and no saving spiritual blessing received. It is said, "Simon himself believed, and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. There was a profession of faith in Christ, and a real faith in the superiority of the miracles wrought in his name, but the subsequent history shows that there was no real conversion.

The Ethiopian eunuch is the next striking example of Christian baptism. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, and returning, was reading the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter liii., when Philip was directed to join him. Gladly receiving the tidings of Christ the Saviour; prepared by his previous study of the word of God, and the remarkable providence of such a teacher joining him, when he came in sight of water he exclaimed, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?"* On hearing this, the chariot was stopped, and Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, "and he baptized him." The eunuch "went on his way rejoicing."

The baptism of Saul the persecutor is the next baptism recorded. It was preceded by his conversion and inquiry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Ananias was then sent by the Lord Jesus to restore him "to sight," and that he might "be filled with the Holy Ghost . . . and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized." And soon after began his glorious mission to preach Christ.

The next baptism was remarkable as being that of the first Gentile, the devout centurion Cornelius, "who feared God with all his house." Miraculously instructed to send for Peter, who was similarly prepared to go to him, he

* The answer of Philip, in the received version, is, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest; and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* But there is reason to think the 37th verse, from its omission in the earliest MSS. is not genuine.

heard the gospel from his lips. "And while Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word," and Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Lydia of Thyatira is the first Christian woman baptized of whom we have an account. She heard the apostle, "the Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul, and she was baptized and her household." It is also the first time we hear of a whole household baptized. She then constrained them to abide in her house.

The jailor of the prison at Philippi was a remarkable instance of sudden conversion under great terrors. His inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" and the full answer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," preceded his baptism. And when they had farther instructed him, and all that were in his house: while "he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; he was baptized and all his straightway." Thus again we read of a whole family baptized together.

The baptism of "many of the Corinthians," who "hearing, believed and were baptized," follows. Soon after, we have the baptism at "Ephesus," of twelve of John the Baptist's disciples, and the distinction between John's baptism and Christian baptism; and the one as preparatory to the other is set before them. "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." This is the last baptism recorded in the Acts, referring us again to the opening of baptism under John.

The apostle, writing to the Corinthians, to reprove their contentions and divisions, gives us a statement respecting his mode of proceeding among them, as to baptism, which must not be omitted. He tells them, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; lest any

should say that I had baptized in my own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other, for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

Much instruction may be derived from these details of baptism, It is very plain that the first Christian teachers did actually with water baptize the converts to Christ, and the proof here is very weighty and conclusive, as to the obligation of this ordinance. It was performed in the case of some, before the Holy Ghost was given, and, in the case of others, after. The baptism of the Spirit did, therefore, not supersede the baptism of water, so as to render that a mere unprofitable form.

The requisites for Christian baptism are clearly set before us: repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus. These marks of regeneration being manifested, immediately the sign and confirmation of regeneration, and the means of receiving the fuller gifts of the Spirit, were imparted to the convert.

The connection of the ministry of the word and baptism should not escape our attention. First, the word preached, then faith, and then baptism. Without the word, there was no new birth. So St. James joins our new birth with the word; "of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." St. Paul does the same; "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel," (I Cor. iv. 15); and that in cases where he did not baptize (1 Cor. i. 14); and St. Peter also says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

The value of baptism in producing joy, stability, decision, and enlargement of love, as well as its connection with fuller gifts of the Holy Ghost, is clear from these facts.

Two other facts may be gathered by implication. It is in the highest degree improbable that the three thousand baptized in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, or the jailor at Philippi and his family baptized in prison, were

wholly "immersed." There is nothing in the history to warrant such an idea.

It is again highly improbable that in the three families mentioned as being baptized, there should be no children. On this more will afterwards be said.

Let us now consider THE RIGHT RECEPTION OF BAPTISM by adults. It is a subject which has acquired much increasing importance from the progress of the gospel in our day among the heathen, and very much of the benefit of baptism depends on its being received in the right state of mind. It tends also to clear up the difficulties of the connection of baptism and regeneration, to see what was requisite in adults.

We are in considerable danger of looking for too much in those to be baptized, forgetting that it is but the first entrance into Christianity, and how readily the apostles received converts on a genuine profession of simple faith in Christ. The details already given of baptism have shewn that repentance and faith are the two graces requisite for Christian baptism. This corresponds with the statements given by the church of England in the catechism, and in the baptismal service for adults.

In answer to the question, "What is required of persons to be baptized?" we are instructed, "Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament." And so in the service for their baptism, we are told they are to be previously examined, whether they be sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion; and before baptism are in their own persons to profess that they renounce the devil, the world and the flesh, and believe in all the articles of the Christian faith, and will hereafter keep God's holy will.

These things are manifestly the very elements of spiritual regeneration in its largest sense; where the profession is sincere, the soul is "born of God." The Scriptures are decisive, "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world." 1 John v. 4. "Whosoever is born of God sinneth

not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." 1 John v. 18. "Every one that loveth is born of God." 1 John iv. 7. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." 1 John v. 1. It is clear, then, that the adult is required to possess those things which peculiarly distinguish the divine birth before he is baptized. But he is not before the church regenerate ; nor in the whole sense of scripture fully regenerate till this has been recognized and confirmed in baptism. His baptism is the sign and seal of these things, not the very things themselves, but the representation and means and confirmation of them in the face of the church. The prayers that they may be born again, and be made "heirs of everlasting salvation," which are offered before the profession of these things by the baptized adult, perfectly correspond with this view ; and the profession is to the church that evidence of regeneration, upon which the seal of baptism is then affixed.

Having thus cleared away these difficulties, let us regard more distinctly repentance and faith as essential to a right reception of baptism in adults.

1. Repentance—to which the apostles so often call their hearers. Repentance (μετανοια) is a change of mind or thought respecting God. Our natural view of God, through our sins and rebellions against him, is, that God is our enemy and hates us ; that he is hard and severe to us, and the more distant we can be from him, the happier we shall be. Thus "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." There is enough, indeed, in all creation, and in the constant providence of God, to teach all human beings what lies they are fostering in entertaining these hard and false views of God. Every ray of sunshine, every drop of rain ; all his care of the brute creation, all his clothing of the flowers of the field, speak irresistibly, "God is love," and patiently bears with sinners, that he may lead them to himself. But men yield not to this loving-kindness of God, but after their hard and impenitent heart treasure up to themselves wrath.

To subdue at length this enmity of man is the glorious prerogative of him who overcomes evil with good. He does this by giving his Son to die, not for the good, not for the righteous, but for sinners. He makes this known by the preaching of the gospel; and a cordial reception of this grace discovers to us our exceeding blindness, wickedness, ingratitude and rebellion; our great ignorance of God's true character as full of holy love to man, and our great ignorance of our own evil state. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."

Under the bright light of this true view of God's gracious character, I learn to hate sin, to loathe myself, to delight in God and in his will and ways. I get an entire change of mind; a real repentance, being a godly sorrow for sin and a hearty turning from sin to God. The beginning of this repentance is requisite in the adult before baptism; but baptism greatly confirms and strengthens true repentance.

How precious is this change of mind, which is the gift of God's love! Both to the Jew and to the Gentile it comes from his bounty. St. Peter tells us of our risen Saviour, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins." Acts v. 31. And the whole church at Jerusalem was filled with praise, when to us Gentiles repentance was also imparted. "They glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Here is the first requisite for baptism—the next is FAITH IN GOD'S PRECIOUS PROMISES. The order in which our Lord mentions faith and baptism (Mark xvi. 16.), the receiving the word before baptism, (Acts ii. 41.), and other passages before mentioned, shew the necessity of faith pre-

vious to baptism.* God has made in his word the richest and fullest declarations of his kindness to man, and of his purposes to do him good. He has promised us the greatest and most desirable things, including nothing less than life eternal. "This is the record that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Our plain duty is without hesitation to believe what he has said; not to charge our God with falsehood, but to give entire confidence to him, "being fully persuaded that what he has promised he is able also to perform." If by divine grace I thus glorify God, I am "filled with joy and peace in believing," I have a means of victory over the world and all its temptation, and I shall rejoice in being baptized into the death of Jesus.

Faith has a reference, however, to all that God has revealed in his word. Its objects of hope and fear, desire and expectation, are as numerous as the objects there set before us. It takes the whole word of God, as given in infinite love, to be our treasury of spiritual riches, and the light to our feet and lamp to our paths.

The first beginning of this faith is what is requisite in adults before baptism. The growth of it is one of the ends of baptism.

It may be observed, that the Catechism of the Church of England directs us to faith in the promises of God made to us in that sacrament. Faith in the grace of the sacrament is needful to the right reception of the sacrament. The promises made in connection with baptism have already been set forth. Baptism is the laver of regeneration, and there are the promises of forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 38, 39,) as well as the acknowledgement, manifestation and assurance of regeneration. When God invites us to come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, he promises, "I will

* It is remarkable that the clearest passage as to the necessity of faith before baptism (Acts viii. 37.), should be an interpolation, as if to shew that the strongest arguments of the Baptists, the necessity of faith, can only be received by the same inferential reasoning which they reject as proving infant baptism.

receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." And in faith of these promises the apostle exhorts us to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." St. Paul was told, "Be baptised and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Incalculably great are these promises, and difficult it is to give our God credit for this fulness of love. The sacrament of baptism is designed to strengthen our feeble faith. May we be followers of Abraham the father of the faithful, who "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

O how many a Christian, like the first Ethiopian, when baptized, has gone "on his way rejoicing;" this open confession of his Lord, and this seal affixed to him by his appointed minister, has greatly strengthened his faith, enlivened his hope and enlarged his love, and lifted up his soul with joy and gratitude, enabling him to run in the way of God's commandments.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WARRANT FOR INFANT BAPTISM, AND ITS DUE RECEPTION.

It is one of the gracious truths of God's word, revealed for the unspeakable comfort of the church, that the children of believers are "beloved for their fathers' sakes" (Rom. xi. 28.); or, as it is beautifully expressed (Deut. x. 15.), "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he choose their seed after them, even you, above all people, as it is this day." The tracing of this through the scriptures will shew us the rich promises made to the children of those who love God, and how graciously they are in his sight regarded.

The family of Noah were saved in the ark through his piety. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark, for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Gen. vii. 1. And on his coming out of the ark, God promises, "Behold I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you." Gen. ix. 9. In yet more explicit language, Abraham is told (Gen. xvii. 7.), I will establish my covenant with thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee —every man-child among you shall be circumcised, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you."

In this remarkable promise and covenant of the Old Testament church, "infants" were, by express directions from the Lord, made members of the church, and received "the seal of the righteousness of" their fathers' "faith."

The covenant on Mount Sinai expressly included infants. "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God—all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives—that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God—as he hath sworn unto thy fathers." Deut. xxix. 10—13. We see here also the children regarded for the sake of their fathers.

The promises of spiritual circumcision are given to their seed after them. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart." Deut. xxx. 6. Circumcision was indeed confined to males; but the apostle, (Gal. iii. 27, 28,) in mentioning baptism, seems expressly to allude to this difference between the Christian and the Jewish dispensation: Now there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female.

The promises made to the children of believers are exceedingly rich and numerous. Our attention is specially directed to it by the inspired writer, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." Thus David testifies—"The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed." Psalm xxxvii. 26. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Psalm ciii. 17. Again, "The generation of the upright shall be blessed." Psalm cxii. 2. Similar are the promises given in the Proverbs, "The seed of the righteous shall be delivered." Prov. xi. 21. "The just man walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him." Prov. xx. 7.

The prophetical writings are rich in these promises. Isaiah testifies this promise—"I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring—one shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, (Isa. xliv. 3—5,) and Jeremiah in a similarly glowing statement assures us of God's purpose:

"I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them." Jer. xxxii. 39. So again Isaiah lix. 21. In the latter-day glory of Israel, this promise is peculiarly explicit, "They are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." Isa. lxv. 23.

But were not these promises peculiar to the Old Testament dispensation? Assuredly not. "All the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus." They are all sure to the spiritual seed of Abraham. The great promise of the ordinance of circumcision was not a mere national and external good; it was a spiritual promise, (Gen. xvii. 7—11. Deut. xxx. 6.) and had a special reference to the Gentiles, (Gen. xvii. 4, 5. Gal. iii. 14.) in its fulness of blessing.

The New Testament also has its gracious continuation of promises to children. "His mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation." And this in special reference to the spiritual blessings connected with baptism. "For the promise (that is, of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost through baptism) is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord shall call."

Even where one of the parents is unbelieving, the fulness of God's love is not restrained from overflowing to the offspring—"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy;" that is, they are set apart for God. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

We have also, as I would mention in the last place, a concentration of every promise in the gracious acts and words of our Redeemer—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark x. 14—16. "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." Matt. xviii. 5.

See, then, in virtue of these promises, the true position

of the children of believers before the Lord ; they are partakers of covenant love, pronounced an heritage of the Lord, and blessed by him ; they have explicit promises of the Holy Spirit and a new heart ; are under the Saviour's express testimony " of such is the kingdom of God ;" they were already from infancy admitted by circumcision into the Jewish church ; and are pronounced " holy " by an inspired apostle, as the offspring of a believing Christian parent. Who may, then, without an express prohibition, refuse their admission by baptism into the Christian church ? As far as regards personal qualification, the requisitions which the Jewish children had for circumcision, Christian children have for baptism ; the only exception being, circumcision was confined to the male children, and the precise age of the Jewish child was pointed out ; while in the larger scheme of the gospel, the distinction of male and female is lost (Gal. iii. 28.) and no age is specified that no age may be excluded.

How good is the Lord ! He has provided a full remedy for all our sin and misery in Christ ; he bids his ministers proclaim it to every human being, and invites all to partake of it ; he secures the application of it to every believer ; and then, as a crown to the whole, meeting the strongest wishes of parental love, he entails upon the posterity of his people the grace of his covenant ; giving the fullest encouragement to the faith of the parent and of the child ; strengthening parental hopes, as well as furnishing general motives to the believing performance of all our duty. The sovereignty of grace, and the faithfulness of truth, shine with pre-eminent brightness here ; the salvation of the infant of the believer is assured : the strongest arguments for pleading in prayer are put into the mouths of parents and of children ; and, supposing faith in personal claims to fail, it may still be sustained, as the experience of the children of God shews, by these promises to parents. Psalm lxxxvi. 16 ; cxvi. 16.

It is true that children when they come to age may by personal unbelief and disobedience fall from this grace,

giving another painful example of the stubbornness of evil against all God's gracious dealings ; but " let God be true, and every man a liar." No experienced Christian who knows himself will charge the fault of ungodly children on God's failure in his own promise, but rather on his own or his children's unbelief and inconsistencies. He will with his whole soul clear God, however he condemns himself, or his own offspring. " The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness upon children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." Psalm ciii. To use the words of Nasmith, in a valuable work, ' a Treatise on the entail of the covenant of grace :' ' if a covenanted people break their part of the covenant, they shall know " his breach of promise," that is, that he is not obliged to perform what he had promised, and would have performed, if they had performed their duty towards him.' Numb. xiv. 34. 2 Chron. xv. 2.

It is strenuously objected by Baptists that faith is essential to baptism. We admit it in the case of adults, but not of infants. And the distinction may be very clearly seen in the case of Abraham. " The sign of circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being uncircumcised." Yet he was required to circumcise his infants. There may, then, be a seal of the righteousness of faith, without there being faith in the receivers of that seal. The distinction is clear in the case of the jailor ; he and all his were baptized. Acts xvi. 38. He believing, πεπιστευκως, rejoiced with all his house. The Baptist really contends not for, but against the divine testimony as to the subjects of this seal, on the very ground he takes. God has shewn that infants are precious in his sight, and that this his seal is to be affixed upon them. Neither faith, nor repentance, nor anything else in us are in themselves the cause of our salvation. The blood of Jesus is the only price before God, and he gives salvation by his promises, according to his own loving-kindness.

The fulness of the grace of God, under the gospel of Christ, is indeed a subject that well may be precious to every heart, and welcomed as a rich treasure by every believer. It was opened with "I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." With the very first introduction of regeneration by water and the Spirit, the Lord testified the fulness of divine love, saying, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He closes his heavenly mission with the same assurance of real love to all men, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

The baptism of infants corresponds with this gracious character of our heavenly Father, and this amplitude, this universality, and this living reality of God's love to every creature. It well harmonizes with that system of rich, and free, and enlarged grace which characterizes the gospel of Christ; which first begins not with our good disposition, else we should despair; but with a voluntary proclamation of grace on the part of God, that we apprehending that grace by faith, may live to him. The gospel at once places man on the ground of grace, proclaiming everywhere "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," and calls them in this confidence to be reconciled to God, and be happy in his service. How delightful it is to see in the ordinance of infant baptism, the provision of God's love for our benefit long before we had any knowledge of him.

The general warrant, then, for the baptism of infants, given as we have seen, in the first commission, is mightily strengthened by the many great and precious promises then made. If such promises of spiritual blessings already belong to children, on what ground can the sign and seal of the promises be withheld from them? If the greater be given, why shall the less be withheld? St. Peter argued

most forcibly respecting Cornelius, and those who heard the word with him, on whom the Holy Ghost had fallen—"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" So we may argue in the case of infants. They are partakers of the promise; let us shew our faith in that promise by giving them its appointed sign. When God in the fulness of love has given such gracious promises to our children, let us believe his promises, and in the expression of this faith, bring our children thus acknowledged by him in the riches of his grace, as meet in his sight for baptism.

That repentance and faith which is requisite for the adult previous to baptism, is in the case of the infant supplied by the promises of grace and of the Spirit to them. Parents are called to dedicate them to God, (Gen. xviii. 19. Deut. iv. 9; vi. 6, 7. Joshua xxiv. 15. Prov. xxii. 6. Ephes. vi. 4. 1 Tim. iii. 15,) and when dedicated in baptism they are called *holy*, as devoted to the Lord. 1 Cor. vii. 14. The sign and seal of that holiness in baptism, ought not, therefore to be withheld from them.* This regeneration and

* I have withheld from the text the strong testimony of the early church to infant baptism. This testimony is given at length in Wall's History of Infant Baptism, and the following summary from Nicholls on the Common Prayer may shew how full and constant that testimony is. "The ancient fathers who lived nighest to the apostolical times, and were the best judges both what was the practice of the very first ages, and how they understood the words of holy writ, do uniformly declare in favour of infant baptism. Irenæus, who lived about 180 years after Christ, says, "Our Saviour Christ came into the world to save all by himself. I say all who are born again by him to God, infants, and children, and boys, and young men, and old men." B. 2, ch. 29. Now, as by being born again can be meant nothing else but baptism, 'tis plain from this writer that the children, which in his time were said to be born again, were baptized. Tertullian, who lived about the year 203 after Christ, allows infant baptism to be the general practice of his time; though by the heretical notions which he had imbibed, he thought the deferring of it was more profitable—"The delay of baptism is more profitable, especially that of little children." Tertul. de Bapt. Origen, who lived but a little after him, says, "Because by the sacrament of baptism the soils of our nativity are laid aside, therefore children are baptized." In Luc. Hom. 8. That this practice was universal in St. Cyprian's time is plain, from the question which then arose, "Whether children were not to be baptized upon the eighth day, as they were formerly circumcised upon, under the Jewish law?" St. Cyprian says, "That a synod in his diocese had resolved this question in the negative." Cyp. Ep. 58. And in another place he is more express: "As to the case of infants, we have judged, that to no one that is born of human race, the mercy and grace of God is to be denied." Ep. 59.

salvation is, so to speak, an objective blessing for the food of faith, and to be brought into a subjective reality in the future lives of the baptized, first through the faith and consistent conduct of their parents, and then in their own growing years.

When the evidence of *early infant* baptism is brought forward, our Baptist brethren are accustomed to say, that there was also evidence in the early church, during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries at least, of *early infant communion*. The answer here is very simple and clear: infants are capable of dedication to God, learning, and salvation; infants are not capable of remembering Christ, and fellowship with his people. We do not receive any customs because they may have been long practised, or been ancient, but because they are scriptural, or not unscriptural, and tend to edification. The church of Christ at large, therefore, has never received infant communion, but the church of Christ at large has ever held infant baptism. An infant may be

To the like purpose St. Ambroso; "Neither an old proselyte nor an infant slave is excepted; for as every age is obnoxious to sin, so every age is capable of the sacrament." Lib. ii, de Abr. So St. Jerome: "Unless perhaps you think that the children of Christians, if they do not receive baptism, are themselves only guilty of sin, and that the guilt ought not to lie at their doors who would not present them to baptism." Hier. Ep. ad Lætam. St. Austin declares his opinion as to this point: "What the universal church by tradition holds, when little children are baptized, who as yet cannot believe with their heart, &c., and yet no Christian will say that they are baptized in vain," Aug. cont. Don. Lib. iv. cap. 23. And again in another place: "The custom of our mother the church in baptizing infants is not to be despised, or by any means to be thought superfluous; neither were it to be believed unless it were an apostolical tradition." Lib. x. de Gen. ad Lit. cap. 23. Nor were the Greek fathers of a different mind. St. Athanasius asks the question, "How shall a man know that he was at all baptized, and received the Holy Ghost, who was an infant when he was baptized?" Athan. Q. II. ad Antioch. The apostolical constitutions order thus: "Baptize also your infants." Lib. vi. cap. 15. St. Chrysostom asks a parent who had lately lost a child, "Why do you mourn for this babe? Why for one that is lately baptized?" Chrys. Hom. xxi. in Act. The like may be proved from Gregory Nazianzen: "What shall we say to the case of infants? Shall we baptize them? Yea, indeed, especially if there be any danger; for it is better that they be sanctified without knowing of it, than to die without the seal and initiation of baptism." Greg. Naz. Or. xl. Indeed about the year 400, there were some who entertained some heterodox notions concerning the baptism of infants, but they were condemned by a canon of the council of Miletus, which was held A.D. 418; "Whosoever shall deny that children may be baptized as soon as they are born, let him be Anathema." It is endless to reckon up the authorities of later writers in the church, who do unanimously confirm the use of Infant Baptism."

capable of inheriting an estate, and yet quite incapable of enjoying it.

Let us not forget the holy perseverance of Moses, "We will go with our young, and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters." Let us not forget they were "all baptized in the Red Sea." Let us not forget that it was Pharaoh who said, "I will not let your little ones go." Let us not forget the wrath that fell upon Pharaoh for this, and that the young became the valiant champions, who alone, excepting Joshua and Caleb, passed through the wilderness, overthrew the Canaanites, and took possession of the promised land.

The very character of our Lord and Saviour is the fulness of love ; grace before merit ; unexpected good freely bestowed ; more loving-kindness than we could have anticipated or imagined ; first love to us, before we have any love to him. What believer has not found it? He was always first, from the beginning, in doing us good. It is only in harmony with his character to bless those so dear to us as our children, with full blessings also : he does "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." The baptism of infants is the confession of the whole church to this grace in our God.

Taking all these things into consideration, there seems great danger both of "unbelief and self-righteousness" in refusing to bring our children to baptism. It is a virtual denial of the truth of God's promises of grace to our children, and the freeness of his love, marked in a refusal to express faith in those promises, by the seal which God has appointed for its manifestation and confirmation. It is a virtual requiring of man's goodness before God's grace. It is a failure of entering into the enlarging fulness of his love, as revealed in the glorious gospel of his grace, and a contraction of that love into narrower limits than God clearly exhibited by circumcision, even from the time of Abraham, and long before the giving of the law.

Salvation by grace is the glory of Bible truth, the hope of fallen man, the grand instrument of holiness and of re-

storation to communion with God, the enjoyment of his love and the full hope of his glory.

In none of the ordinances of God is this free salvation more brightly exhibited than in the precepts to circumcise the Jew and his infant offspring, (Gen. xvii. 7—9,) and to disciple and baptize the Gentiles, with their households. Matt. xxviii. 18. Acts xvi. 15, 33.

Before an infant can have done any good work whatsoever, here is a precious ordinance of God's free love, translating it from nature to grace, from a fallen state to a state full of hope and full of blessing ; engrafting it into his own church, exciting the hopes and prayers of his people for it, sealing to it most precious promises, showing the promptness and fore-casting love of God for its salvation, and leading parents to bring up their children with the high and holy hopes, and rich spiritual privileges of the children of the living God. And, with all this, in a visible public exhibition to all men, in the face of day, by an outward and most significant rite, pointing out the full design of God's love to be the removing of all its sins, and the bringing it cleansed and purified to his heavenly kingdom.

It may tend farther to illustrate this subject to consider the scripture statements respecting THE SALVATION OF INFANTS.

The first ground of our hopes is the death of our Lord Jesus Christ for all,—" as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." No other foundation of hope can we have, but through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that death is ample to atone for the sins of all.

The scriptures shew us that the saints of God have justly hoped for the salvation of their children. David said of his dead infant—" I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Rachael mourning for her children, applied (Matt. ii. 17, 18.) to the slaughter of the infants under two years of age, is comforted by the assurance—" There is hope in

thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border." Jer. xxxi. 17.

Observe the conduct of Christ under the New Testament : "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He has the same mind and heart now, in heaven, that he had when on earth. Look at his conduct to children—"He took a child, and set him in the midst of his disciples, and when he had taken him in his arms he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." And he afterwards on another occasion, explicitly says, "of such is the kingdom of God." These testimonies seem conclusive as to the love Jesus bears to infants, and their salvation on dying before they have committed actual sin in their own persons. If they are then fit to be taken to the heavenly kingdom, well may they be welcomed to the spiritual kingdom.

The kingdom of God may either mean his militant church here on earth, or his triumphant heavenly kingdom ; in either view, our Lord's words justify their baptism ; if they already belong to his militant church, they are entitled to baptism, which is the rite of entrance into it. If he means his triumphant heavenly kingdom, into which they cannot enter without spiritual regeneration, then are they also entitled to baptism, which is the appointed sign of this regeneration.

Having thus prepared the way, we may now the more summarily notice, the express scriptural warrants for this practice.

1. THE CLEAR AND NUMEROUS PROMISES OF GRACE TO THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS, as already brought forward.

2. THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE COMMISSION. "Go ye, and train up, as disciples,* all nations, baptizing them.

* This has, in a former chapter, been sufficiently established as inclusive of infant baptism. The application of μαθητευω to infants is clear also from a passage in Justin Martyr's Apology, where he says, "several persons

It is clear that the term "nations" includes infants. There is not merely no prohibition against the practice, but the command includes the class in consideration. And when we remember that infants were members of the Jewish church, and that the Christian dispensation was never designed to contract, but was designed to enlarge and extend, the manifestations of divine grace, we cannot but justly view them as designedly comprehended in this commission. Our Baptist brethren ask for a command, and urge obedience. Here is a plain and positive "inclusive command." Let them obey the Lord of heaven and earth.

3. THE CORRESPONDING RITE OF CIRCUMCISION DEMANDS THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS. It is true that circumcision became distinctive of the Jewish church, but it was appointed as the token of Gentile blessedness; (Gen. xvii. 1—14.) it also is true that it was confined to male children, but we are told in a passage having reference to baptism, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." The analogy of baptism and circumcision, and the merging of circumcision in the rite of baptism, are set before us in the epistle to the Colossians—"In Christ also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism." They are both ordinances introducing members into the church of God; what circumcision was under the law, baptism is under the gospel.

4. THE ACTUAL BAPTISM OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES recorded in the Acts strengthens these views. We have seen that Lydia and "her household," (Acts xvi. 15.) "the Jailor and all his," (Acts xvi. 31—33.) Stephanas and

among us of 60 and 70 years old, of both sexes, who were made disciples to Christ from their childhood (εκ παιδων εμαθητευθησαν) do continue uncorrupted." When we remember that Justin wrote about 140 years after Christ—70 years taken from this would bring his testimony of the practice of infant baptism to the apostolic age.

"his household," (1 Cor. i. 16.) were baptized. The inference to be naturally drawn from the mention of households is, that the children, servants, and dependants were baptized.

The objections made to these statements by no means set them aside. It is asked why then are not infants EXPRESSLY named in the commission to baptize, as in the household? We might ask another question too, why are not the females mentioned in the institution of the Lord's Supper? "Drink ye all of it" is not more comprehensive than "baptize all nations." Or why do not Baptists confine the holy communion literally to a supper? The fact is, that as every doubt could not be met, so it did not please God to give greater light, that the spirits of men might be manifested, and it might be seen how far they would act in harmony with his gracious designs of love. The whole of Revelation is full of illustrations of this truth. The evidence of the resurrection was not in the Old Testament so full as to exclude controversy, and our Lord proved it by inference. Matt. xxii. Our Lord's life and conduct left innumerable things in a measure of darkness on this very ground. And to what watchfulness and self-distrust does this call us!

It is asked, what is your plain scriptural authority for infants being baptized? and that authority has now been given. The first appointment is the full authority. Matt. xxviii. 19. It may then now also, on the other side, with far more weight, be asked, Where is the authority for excluding infants from the church of God? or from the rite of admission to that church? Where is there a shadow of proof that the christian church excluded infants, who had been admitted into the Jewish church? How dare you risk all the consequences which would follow through a whole professedly Christian country, from the neglect of infant baptism?

Do you talk of obscurity still,—Christian reader? Neglecting infant baptism, you are acting, in your own case, on greater obscurity. Rather admire the wisdom of God in not more positively and distinctly ordering the baptism

of infants. It has called forth researches full of benefit to the churches. We have seen how infant baptism also, though included in the command, and though it be rather by just inferences from God's word than express precept, that the church baptizes children, has been overvalued and perverted, how much more would Christians have been exposed to this danger had there been minute directions respecting it ! * The Christian church has also a freedom and liberty from forms which the Jewish had not, and we see this in the different direction respecting the introductory rites. In that of the Jewish it was confined to the male child, and the day was specified, and the mode was bloody. In that of the Christian, the female is included, the age is not fixed, and the mode is with pure water.

Though it seems harsh to say so—yet faithfulness is true love, and let us suggest to our brethren, whether instead of want of scriptural light it may not be want of conformity to God's mind and will ; whether instead of the failure of precept, it may not be the failure of a right moral disposition within, that is the grand impediment to conviction on this subject. It has been very forcibly observed, in addressing them—"Though you little think, the strongest testimony you now require would leave you unconvinced. I am persuaded that were there two solemn records of an express literal command to baptize infants, followed by an instance of not less than 2000 infants being baptized in one day, and subsequently ten other instances in the scripture of infant baptism, whether singly or in companies, yea, and in addition to all this, seven references to the doctrine of infant baptism by the New Testament writers, drawing

* The care of God over his church, in not more explicitly commanding, by positive and direct institution appointing the baptism of infants, is strikingly seen from the perverse use made of their baptism without such direct institution. Self-righteous formalism grew to a prodigious extent under the outward services of Judaism ; and the simple rites even of Christianity have been abused to the undue magnifying of the priesthood and of the sacraments. If, with so little that is said upon the subject, and infant baptism itself flowing rather from inference than positive appointment, men have ventured to identify baptism and regeneration, had then such baptism been more prominent in the scripture, we may easily conceive how much more extensively it would have been abused. The omissions of scripture are full of instruction.

lessons of holiness and comfort from it, I am persuaded that even such a testimony as this would not alter the opinions of many, if not the majority of those who now oppose infant baptism : for this is precisely the testimony for baptism in general ; (adult or otherwise) nevertheless, it is rejected by two whole sects with saints in both of them, and by sundry scattered individuals. It is a simple fact, that if a little unintelligence creates a little wilfulness about any truth, that wilfulness again re-acts upon the unintelligence, making it greater than before ; and this tendency never so betrays itself as when it patronizes some favourite dogma, or tramples on some rejected truth." May the knowledge of this lead us all to forbearance, and love towards each other, and great self-distrust and suspicion as it regards ourselves.

The celebrated Baxter, in his plain scripture proof of infant church membership, thus closes his remarks on Mark ix. 36, 37—" I bless the Lord Jesus, the King of the church, for having so great tenderness to the infants themselves, and so great a care of the information of his church concerning his will as to speak it thus plainly—that plain-meaning men may well see his mind ; even as if he had therefore done this because he foresaw that in these latter days some would arise that would renew the disciples' mistake on this point, and think it unfit to bring infants to Jesus Christ." Page 107.

The goodness of God in thus caring for infants and providing for their being dedicated to him from their earliest years, is very great ! It stamps the form of Christianity deeply on a whole country ; it directs the parent how to bring up his children in faith in God's promises ; it seeks to secure obedience to the divine direction of bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; it furnishes children with many motives for adhering to the faith of Christ, and it is a great step towards making each country a righteous nation.

The baptism of infants admirably corresponds with the benevolent and gracious character of the gospel—or the

good tidings of great joy to all people: as a system of rich, free, sovereign and unmerited grace. Here God meets us at our very birth with a provision of mercy; introduces us into the bosom of the church, and brings us into the sympathy and prayers of his family. Hence, even those who have not been able to see "the scriptural warrant" for infant baptism, have yet judged it to be so valuable, as an institution even of the church, that Christians should, on that account, adhere to it. But it is indeed the wisdom and love of God "in his word," rather than the wisdom given to the church, which is the true and solid foundation of infant baptism.

It may tend to quicken the hearts of parents to avail themselves of all the means which God has afforded for promoting the salvation of their children, to notice the unutterably important issues of a godly seed, or an ungodly seed, and what provision God has made that we may escape the evil, and obtain the good.

How fearful, when we look on the face of the whole earth, and trace the present condition of its inhabitants back to their original ancestors, and mark how, step by step, men departed from God, is the responsibility of rightly using that precious trust, the gift of children! We may see, with broad and distinct lines, in every land, how vast and extensive, how lengthened, how enduring is the influence of the conduct of the parent on the character and happiness of future ages! An infant born in New Zealand, follows its cruel parents in barbarism and cannibalism; an infant in China inherits the deceitfulness and ungodliness of Chinese paganism: infants among Arabs, Hottentots, American Indians, are brought up in all the respective peculiarities, vices, and miseries of their various countries, and continue in them, unless as God graciously interposes, with deepening darkness and misery. Yet the original ancestors of all these, thus sunk in error and wickedness, were the sons of one man, and had equal advantages in the beginning, till parents led the way in evil. Ham and his son Canaan departed from the good ways of Noah, and

so all Africa became debased. In one branch of the family of Shem, chiefly through God's special interposition in the call of Abraham, the church of God continued for 2000 years; in other branches we see the issues of wickedness throughout the immense continent of Asia.

What a blessing was Abraham's piety to his posterity! And the inheritance of this is expressly assured to all the followers of the faith of Abraham; so that we see a similar blessing in the families of all who truly receive the gospel. The strength of vital godliness in every country is in those who were the children of pious parents, and the hope of the age to come is in their descendants. They, too, are made the vessels of mercy to bear mercy to others, and thus gospel blessedness spreads through them all around them.

This accords with the revealed mind of God, who meets the deepest and strongest wishes of the human heart, yearning over our offspring that they may partake of our happiness, by assuring to the children of believers the same blessings which they themselves enjoy, and by giving the seal of baptism to strengthen the faith of the parent, animate him to a faithful discharge of his momentous duties, and stir up every baptized child to lay hold of God's covenant of promise, by his own faith and obedience to his everlasting salvation.

The ABUSE OF INFANT BAPTISM furnishes to many minds the most plausible objections to this full privilege of the church when rightly used. God has in his word predicted that rising of the smoke out of the bottomless pit which should darken the sun and the air, obscuring the glory of Christ and the influences of his Spirit. Rev. ix. 2. One specimen of this may be seen in the way the Romanists have corrupted the baptism of infants with human additions, and over-valued it, as conveying of itself, when administered by authorized ministers, the blessings which it signifies, and of which it is the means and pledge to the faithful receivers.* May our Protestant Church never be

* A learned Romanist, Edmund Martine, may give the reader a full illus-

seduced back again to those errors from which we have been so mercifully delivered.

The abuses in the administration of infant baptism have also lowered our sense of this privilege. Some, sacrificing all the benefit of the communion of saints in the public congregation, prefer having it in a drawing-room or in a cottage. The size of some parishes is such as to occasion its administration to be gone through in a way very unsuitable to an ordinance of God, and in a crowd and haste very unfavourable to personal devotion. With many it is a mere ceremony to give a name to the child, or to have a family feast and an outward show. The sponsors often count it rather an act of mere friendship, with no accompanying blessings and duties. Let these abuses be put away, and let us return to the regularity of church order and decency, according to the directions which God himself has given us, (1 Cor. xiv. 40.) and we shall roll away many a scruple and difficulty.

The RIGHT RECEPTION of infant baptism, concerns especially the parents and the church of Christ, and the baptized only as they come to age. The foregoing chapter and the following appendix will shew what ample ground God has given in his word for our faith. Let us look then on the whole service with the eye of faith, "being fully persuaded that what God hath promised he is able to perform," and in the strength of this faith let us joyfully receive a fresh member into the church, entering into every prayer and every thanksgiving in our beautiful baptismal service, and every testimony in our brief but most comprehensive Catechism. There is an entail of grace in the fulness of God's love to our children. It is not an object of sight and sense, but of promise and faith; that faith which gives a substance to things hoped for, and is the evidence of things not seen, and to which all things are possible. The Lord give all Christian parents and Christian congregations this precious faith in every baptism of every child, and seal with his own Spirit all receiving his own ordinance.

tration of this in his work, De Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus; a book, however, replete with much valuable information.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VII.

THE COVENANT PRIVILEGES OF THE CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS have been largely considered by theological writers. It is a subject of such deep importance, and so calculated to strengthen the faith, and enliven the hopes of Christian parents, that I have made the following somewhat lengthened selections from that valuable work, Strong on the Covenants, on this subject:—

'It exceedingly advances the grace of God unto parents, and makes much for the consolation of believers, that not only the Lord extends mercy to them, but to their seed, as he extended it to Abraham's seed (Gen. xvii. 7); by which God exceedingly exalts his free grace; and so it is made an argument of special love unto parents. Deut. iv. 37. "Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them."

'This is one of the great arguments that the scripture uses to draw men in to believe; because not only they shall have benefit by it, but their posterity. There is a double use that I find the apostle makes of that argument: (1.) To the children, as a means to bring them in. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, for ye are the children of the covenant which God made for your fathers" (Acts iii. 19, 25); there is mercy in a special manner offered unto you, and unto you first; because you are the children of the covenant, and therefore have in a special manner a right to it. (2.) To the parents (Acts ii. 38), "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins, for the promise is to you and your children;" not only you shall have benefit by it, but your children, upon whom you have brought a curse, and therefore were not *parentes sed peremptores* (not parents, but murderers,) as Bernard speaks of all men, in reference to their children, in a state of nature; they also shall have benefit by it; and by your laying hold of the covenant, be brought in under the same covenant with you; your children, that are now children of the curse, they shall become children of the covenant. Now as it should be a great argument to keep men from sin, that therein they wrong their posterity, it is a treason that taints the blood: so it should be a great engagement unto all parents to come within the covenant, that the grace of the covenant might also in them be extended unto all their seed.'

Mr. Strong then gives many proofs that children are taken into covenant with their parents. Among others, stating these :—

'Children are members of the visible church, where their parents are in covenant with God; grafting in, is admission into visible membership; as breaking off, is a casting out of visible membership. So Mark x. 4. "Of such (not only of these very little ones, but of such as these) is the kingdom of heaven."

'Hence it comes to pass, that there is a holiness comes upon those children of believing parents. Rom. xi. 16. "If the root be holy, so are the branches, and if the first fruits be holy, the lump is also holy." The root is Abraham and the fathers, and they are said to be the first fruits, because they were first consecrated unto God, and the branches were dedicated in their root, and the lump in the first fruits. And so 1 Cor. vii. 14. "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." * What is the holiness that is here meant? It is not a personal and inherent holiness that is here spoken of; for the branches that were thus holy were broken off, which, if they had been truly and spiritually holy, they could never have been; therefore it is spoken only of a federal and derived holiness from their parents' covenant; as Israel is called "the holy nation," Exod. xix. 6, and "the holy people," Dan. viii. 24, xii. 7; that is, a people that God had separated to himself, of all nations under heaven, whom he would in a special

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* Mr. Strong afterwards makes these further remarks on this passage :—

"The apostle does not say, that the child is sanctified unto the parents, but 'tis said positively of their children, *that they are holy*. There is a double holiness, status et usus, of state and use, the wife is sanctified unto his use, as all other things are by virtue of the covenant of grace, a blessing to him, and shall not be a snare unto his soul, nor a means to pollute and defile his inward man; and so is his honour sanctified, and his estate sanctified, and all things that belong to him; which cannot be said to be holy in themselves, but sanctified unto the man; but this of children is the holiness of their *state*; that they are holy without respect unto their parent's use, they are so counted by God and are to be so reputed by men.

"It is a holiness that may be lost; for these branches may be broken off, that is, either cast out with their parents, as the church of the Jews were; when the Lord was pleased to unchurch them, and call them Lo-ammi, he did with their parents cast out their children, and they were holy unto God no more; or else they may be cast out and justly deprived of their own privileges by their own personal offences, and so be cast off from this state of holiness. This holiness is a special privilege which the Lord hath annexed unto the covenant of grace, taking in the children of believing parents into covenant with themselves, making the promises of the covenant to run to them and their seed; that as natural parents in a natural way convey sin, so believing parents in a federal way may also convey holiness to their seed.

"They are separated from the rest of the world, to be a visible church unto God; and by virtue of this separation or partition-wall, the Jews were commonly called the *holy people*, because they were taken by God into the holy covenant. The name of God is called upon them, and they are children of God, and he owns them for his."—Strong, 217.

manner own, and amongst whom he had set up his ordinances, and would dwell; for federal holiness is nothing else but being separated from the world, to become a member of the visible church, and thereby to have a right unto the ordinances and privileges of a visible member, though he be not truly converted or begotten unto God: and this is called being a "Jew outwardly," that is, a member of the visible church, and to whom the privileges of a church member did belong; but there is a "Jew inwardly," in whose heart there dwells converting grace.

'We meet with very glorious promises that God has made to the posterity of the saints. Deut. xxx. 6. "The Lord will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed; Fear not, Jacob my servant, and thou Jeshurun whom I have chosen; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as the grass, and as the willows, &c. My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth and for ever." Now though these promises shall not be made good unto every particular person in the church, yet it is the church of God that is the proper subject unto whom they shall be made good, and in an ordinary way they shall be accomplished unto none else.

'The first discovery that we have of the gospel in Scripture is that (Gen. iii. 15.) where the woman being first in the transgression, the Lord was pleased to enter into covenant with her, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."

'The covenant was renewed in delivering Noah himself from the flood that was then to come on the earth, and therein his seed also was taken; for so it runs, "with thee and thy sons," &c.; and also after the flood, in reference to himself and his posterity, that the Lord would not destroy them by a flood, as he had done their forefathers. Gen. ix. 9. 'I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you," so that the covenant still runs in those terms; the Lord never made a covenant with the parent, but he took his seed into the same covenant expressly. The next mention we read of the covenant was with Abraham, when the Lord would take his family into covenant with himself; wherefore the covenant is said after a sort to begin in him. Micah vii. 20. "Mercy" to "Abraham," and "truth" to "Jacob;" and still it runs "with thee and thy seed," and not only his immediate seed, but also his seed in many succeeding generations, from one age to another, unto the end of the world; "thy seed after thee in their generations."

'Children have exercised faith by virtue of their parents' covenant; and pleaded to God their covenant interest. So David, (Ps. lxxxvi. 16,) "O turn unto me and have mercy upon me, give thy strength to

thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid; truly I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid."

'The benefit of the covenant, from God's abundant grace, is thus conveyed, not only to the parent, but to his posterity; and so David looks upon it, and admires the mercy. 2 Sam. vii. 18, 19. "Lord, who am I, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet as if this were a small thing in thy sight, O Lord, thou hast spoke of thy servant's house for a great while to come: and is this the manner of men, O Lord God? For thy word's sake, and according to thy own heart hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant to know them."

'God has so ordered the eternal decree of election, that the great number of the elect of God do proceed out of the loins of his own people; and therefore the promises being but the indefinite expressions of his decrees, they run to parents called, and unto their children, because the great number of them that shall be called are their children.'

He shows thus that children have always been "members" of the church:

'Children have always been taken into the same covenant with their parents, and have been members of the same church with them. When the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, he took in his family to be a church; when he took in the Jews, he took in their children also to "be unto him a holy and a peculiar people;" and when he cast out the children of the kingdom, and gave them a bill of divorce, removing the candlestick, he excommunicated and disinherited their children; and when he takes the Gentiles into covenant also, it is with them and with their seed in their generations, and therefore the master of the family being converted, "salvation is come to his house," and there is "a church in his house," his family becomes of those of whom the visible church is constituted; for the Gentiles were grafted in as the Jews were broken off, and that was in reference to a church state for themselves and their posterity; and so were the Gentiles grafted into a church state for themselves and their posterity; and the Lord has given us rule for it, (Deut. xxix. 14,) when he enters into a church covenant with that people, and with their little ones, that they should be a people unto himself, that is, a church unto God,' (verse 15.)

In speaking of the privileges insured to children of believers, Mr. Strong remarks—

'In Rom. ix. 4, the apostle recounts the external privileges of the Jewish church and members thereof, and he reckons up eight very

remarkable ones: "whose is the adoption;" not spiritual adoption, but the honour to be called the sons of God, and to be separated from all other people, and nations under heaven, by a marriage-covenant. Exod. xix. 5. "The glory;" the ark was the special token of God's presence: and to them was given "the law, the worship of God, the promises; of whom were the fathers, and of whom according to the flesh Christ came." Now all these belonged to the body of the nation, as being taken into a marriage covenant, and the external privileges of it, which did belong to them, that should never have any spiritual and saving benefit by it. It is one thing to have an interest in the covenant in reference to the spiritual and eternal mercies of it, called "the sure mercies of David," by the prophet, and by the apostle "the holy things of David;" and another to have interest in the covenant only in reference unto the temporal promises and outward privileges thereof; and there is many a man that has interest in the one, that neither has nor ever will have benefit by the other.

'It will aggravate their sin if they abuse this grace, therefore it is a mercy and a privilege in itself; for what is not a mercy and a privilege in itself, that cannot add to a man's sin and judgment. Now as it is in riches and honour, and all the blessings in this life, they will be unto a man judgment if they are abused; therefore they are blessings in themselves—blessings in the thing though a snare to the man; so this very argument, that is brought to prove that they are no blessings, and give no benefits, does clearly prove that the thing itself is a privilege and a blessing.

'But what are those privileges and those particular benefits that come upon a person and his posterity thereby? (1.) Many of them shall be saved, elected, and converted to God; for the Lord takes the number of his elect out of the loins of his own; "the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven," is hid in the visible church here as wheat in a heap of chaff. (2.) It is the only hope that parents have for the salvation of their children dying in their infancy. David did hope it, though he might say with Austin, "Ego in illo puero nihil habim præter delictum;" yet he saith, "I shall go to him," and his heart was quieted concerning his eternal state, by virtue of that covenant made with him. We have no other promise but this, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed;' and this is gospel. A man is as truly bound to lay hold of the promise, and cast himself upon it, for his seed as for himself. (3.) There is no ordinary way of salvation, but it is amongst them that are taken into covenant; "salvation is of the Jews;" there was in an ordinary way salvation to be had nowhere else; and therefore by being taken into the outward privileges of the church, a man is brought into the ordinary way of salvation. (4.) It is a special honour to be the vineyard of the

Lord, the garden of the Lord hedged in from the rest of the world, his wall, a wine-press, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed, to be called the sons of God, the people of God, and the Lord to avouch them such publicly before all the world to be his peculiar treasure, the Lord to be their God, and they his people above all the people of the earth, "their's is the adoption;" it is spoken of this federal external sonship. (6.) By this you have special privileges: "Jerusalem" is the "valley of vision," and "Jeshurun" the "seeing people;" it is "Ariel, the altar of the Lord; chiefly to them are committed the oracles of God," which they are to keep and transmit unto posterity; it is a "depositum" laid up and concredited to them. "In Judah is God known, and his name is great in Israel: he hath not dealt so with other nations;" they are a people near unto him, and the Lord hath promised that he will give them his special presence: "I will dwell in the midst of them." Christ walks in the middle of the golden candlesticks, though he be in glory.'

The grounds on which it pleases God to continue his covenant to the children of his people, are stated in part as follows:—

'The Lord will continue the covenant from parents to children by a kind of lineal descent, in reference to the external privileges of the covenant; and they shall be conveyed from parents unto children, who shall have a covenant-right as the parent's privilege; and the grounds of it are these:—

'Because the Lord will have a visible church out of the loins of his own people; therefore when he takes in their parents into a church-covenant, he takes in also their children.

'The covenant is entailed in reference to the privileges thereof, that the Lord might magnify and exalt his love unto parents the more; and that it might be a great inducement to come into covenant with God, because "the promise" shall be "unto you and your children, even unto them that are afar off," or "as many as the Lord shall call;" not only to the Jews and their children, but also to the Gentiles, for that is meant by afar off. Eph. ii. 17.

'The Lord would engage their children to himself above all the families and posterities of the earth, and therefore he calls them "the children born unto him, thou hast taken my sons and my daughters that thou hast born to me;" and they shall have the privilege that none upon earth have, whereby they may be engaged to God; and if they be wicked, they may be the more left without excuse; they are persons given up and dedicated to God in their infancy, and from the womb: there is written upon them, "holiness to the Lord;" and if outward and temporal mercies be such great obligations upon the soul, what are spiritual and church mercies!

'To shew forth the goodness and overflowing mercy of Christ, under the second covenant, unto unregenerate men, who for the state of their persons are under the covenant of works, and are enemies unto the covenant of grace, and yet they shall enjoy many privileges and benefits thereby; and this the Lord does bestow upon them, either as preparatives and as means to fit them for services, or as privileges and rewards of services; for all the creatures are now given into the hands of Christ, and all men in the church belong to him; they all come under him, either as servants or as sons; they that are sons partake in the graces of the covenant, but the servants also partake in the privileges of it, for they abide in the house, though not for ever; and while they are in the house they have bread enough and to spare; they partake of the root and fatness of the good olive-tree; they have church ordinances that fit them for service, and they receive church privileges as temporal rewards of service.'

Mr. Strong well meets the common objections of the Baptists about the analogy of circumcision.

'Some men deny the authority of the whole Old Testament, at least any further than it is in express words confirmed in the New; and this is looked upon as an argument sufficient to answer any argument that is brought for any thing of the Old Testament. Can you show any thing in the New Testament for it? As if the Old Testament were now antiquated and out of date: but we dare not divide the two words of the apostle, which he doth apply generally unto all the Scripture—πᾶσα γραφὴ θεοπνευστος και ὠφέλιμος.

'"The whole scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable," &c., therefore either we must deny it to be divine inspiration, or we must say not only that it was, but it is still profitable: and we know that Christ and his apostles generally confirm the doctrines of the gospel by "Moses," and the prophets; and our divines do generally therefore say that the Old Testament is but Evangelium, sub velo, which "now we see with open face."

'Our baptism is the seal of the same covenant that circumcision was then; the covenant of grace was the same for substance with that under the New Testament; for it is "Abraham's" covenant that was sealed in circumcision, and so it is in baptism also: see Rom. iv.

'The persons taken into covenant of old were the children and their parents:—'I will be thy God and the God of thy seed; their children are the sons of the covenant, and of the promise that God made with their fathers, &c. This has been manifested, not only under the law, but before the law, from the beginning, and also under the gospel: the Lord, as he cast off the Jews and their children, so he took in the Gentiles and their children into covenant with himself.

'That baptism succeeds in the room and place of circumcision, as the seal of the same covenant, and as the ordinance of initiation, will appear, 1st. Because the end was the same in both; viz. to be the sacrament of admission of visible members; 2nd. Because the grace of the thing signified is the same. Circumcision is cutting off the body of sins from the flesh, and baptism is a being buried with Christ in his death by a work of mortification.'

The objections on the ground of the incapacity of children are thus met:—

'As the children are brought into covenant by a parental right and not a personal, so to their being in covenant the consent of the parents is, in God's account accepted: and a personal consent is not required; but as when the parent doth dissent, he doth thereby keep the child out of covenant, as all heathens do, who do not consent to the gospel, and as the Jews did that cast off and rejected the word of life; so when parents do consent, they bring the children within the covenant, which runs unto them and to their seed as confederates; it is therefore the consent of the parents that is in God's covenant taken for the consent of the child.

'Suceamus, in his book "De Baptismo," lays down two rules which are of excellent use unto the present question, that the covenant of grace is to take in the seed together with the parent. 1. It is a special overflowing of grace to the parents, which they are to believe and consent unto: for though the benefit of it comes upon the children, yet it is the parents' privilege, and it is a part of the gospel of grace which he is to give consent unto, and his faith takes hold of, that God will be the God of his seed, as well as of himself. He is to take hold of the covenant in all the parts of it,—that is not for himself only, but for his seed also.

'2. All infants may be imputatively called believers, that is in God's consent and esteem. They are also persons in covenant with God, and the consent of their parents is imputed or counted by God as their consent. Now we know that imputation is an act of sovereignty and of God's own free-will, as it appears in that God will account "Adam" and his posterity one, and that he will account Christ and the saints to be one; and so impute the sin of the one and the righteousness of the other. And if the Lord will impute the consent of parents to their children, so as to own them as his in covenant with him according the word, till they do themselves manifest their dissent and cast off the covenant of their God, he may justly do it.

'Shall God say—"I will take thee and thy seed into the covenant," and shall men say, Were it not better to leave the seed out till they can actually understand and give consent unto the covenant into which

they are taken? Truly it is abominable presumption and unthankfulness.'

These extracts are closed with the following practical remarks on the use of baptism of children.

'So should all the faithful do, look upon all the promises that are made unto the seed of the faithful in the scripture, and put them in suit before the Lord for thy seed also, as being part of the covenant which the Lord has made with you. We might by this means leave and entail very great blessings on our posterity, and live to see the covenant accomplished to them to the great comfort and consolations of our soul: "Thy children shall be like olive-plants round about thy table; behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." The church has been called the "olive-tree," as we have seen in Rom. ii. 16, 17, and they, as church-members, are as olive-plants, those who are of use and excellence, profiting church and common-wealth. "This is my covenant," saith the Lord, "my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth—nor out of thy seed or seed's seed, henceforth and for ever." Whilst we straighten the covenant and our covenant interest to ourselves, we are enemies to our own consolation; the great flourishing of our soul lies in the enlargement of the faculties, and they are vast objects that do cause large faculties; it is of admirable use to a man's own soul to look unto the covenant in the extent of it to you and your seed.

'2. It is a matter of exhortation unto children, that they would walk worthy of this mercy;—this inheritance that God has entailed upon them, and not despise the grace of God in their parents' covenant, but actually take hold of the covenant in their own persons. (1.) Consider, grace has prevented you, and you are taken in by God into a familiar covenant with himself, merely out of preventing mercy, whereas thou mightest have been born among the uncircumcised; it is no small privilege to be born of those who are themselves in covenant with God. (2.) It will be a great aggravation to thy sin and judgment when thou shalt, like Esau, despise thy birthright; the contempt of a spiritual privilege is a great sin and dishonour to God, and it will surely add to thy judgment: 'The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. Matt. viii. 12. And how will that never-dying worm gnaw upon thy conscience when it shall tell thee—I had a godly parent, one within the covenant of God, by whom I had a right unto all outward privileges of membership; but I have walked unworthy of them all, and abused them all, and therefore now some come from the east and from the west, others are grafted by their own faith that were born of wicked parents, and I was as it were

a natural branch, grew upon a holy stock and in covenant, and am now rejected and cast out as an abominable branch. (3.) The people of God have exercised faith upon their parents' covenant, and have been able sometimes in distress to plead that, when they have little to say for themselves. Exod. xv. 1. When Moses prays, he says—"Thou art my God and my father's God;" and the children of Israel, though they could say little for themselves, for they were a wicked and disobedient people, and all their righteousness as filthy rags, yet they say—"Remember the covenant that thou madest to Abraham, and the land that thou gavest unto Abraham thy friend for ever;" and so David pleads—"Thy servant and the son of thy handmaid."'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REASON AND USE OF SPONSORS.

One great design of the Christian religion is ultimately to heal all the divisions, and remove all the enmities that now subsist on our earth. Its first effects may indeed have an opposite tendency. "I came not to send peace, but a sword;" but its issue is "abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

The main character, principle, and rule of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is in the spirit of this issue; it is the law of "love," that is the leading and prominent law of the gospel. Clearly are we taught, the duty of every man not "to look on his own things only, but on the things of others also;" and plain is the direction to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ;" and it is enforced by the highest of all sanctions—the glorious example of the Lord of all.

It is in entire accordance with such principles that the Church of England has appointed godfathers and godmothers as sponsors (or persons making promises for others), to answer for infants at their baptism, The term godfather and godmother is given, because they promise before God that they will be as spiritual parents to the infant, being such at his initiation or reception into the church of Christ.

That the church has full right to appoint things not contrary to God's word, which those in authority judge to be for edification, is clear from the plain direction, "Let all things be done unto edifying," 1 Cor. xiv. 26. That we ought to be subject to such appointments is clear also: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints, (ver. 32, 34); and let all things be done decently and in order." ver. 40. In these things the true fear of God calls not to dispute and division, but charges us, "Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Ephes. v. 21.

The institution of sponsors must be considered as an appointment of the church, judged meet for edification, and not directly as an ordinance of the word of God. We say directly, because in human appointments, when not contrary to the scriptures, the divine rule makes them really obligatory on us. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers—ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake."

But it is worthy of remark, that the turning point in Judah's conduct, on which the whole of the happy issue of his father and brethren out of their troubles hinged, was an act of sponsorship for a younger brother. "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, let me bear the blame for ever." A promise nobly redeemed on that touching occasion when he offered himself instead of that brother, saying, "Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the the lad, a bondsman unto my Lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren."

It is well also for us to remember that far more glorious Surety, who not only offered himself, but at the costly price of his own blood redeemed us from all our sins. With such a debt of obligation to such a surety, well may we be willing, at some little cost, to undertake exertions for the spiritual good of those unable by reason of their infancy to undertake anything for themselves.

It is probable, from the scriptures, that the Jews had witnesses at the naming of their children at circumcision. Thus when Isaiah's son was called Maher-shalal-hash-baz, he says, "I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah." Isaiah viii. 2.

But it is certain that the institution of sponsors began very early in the Christian church. Traces of it may be discovered in the writings of the fathers of the second, third, and fourth centuries. An early writer, supposed to be Justin, says, 'Children partake of the benefits of baptism, by the faith of those who bring them.' Tertullian speaks of the desireableness of the delay of baptism, because of the sponsors otherwise being exposed to so much hazard. Cyril says, 'He who brings the infant, answers aloud Amen for him.' Augustine says, 'Where shall we place the baptized infants but among the faithful, for this privilege they have acquired by virtue of the sacrament, and by their sureties answering for them.' These statements shew that in these early ages persons were accustomed to bring the children, and to answer for them.*

When the church of England was reformed and purified from papal corruption, was she then to lay aside a practice which had been observed in the church before the time of papal apostacy and corruption,—especially when that custom tends to much edification ? This would not have accorded with that wisdom which God gave to its founders.

It has been objected—"Parents, not strangers, ought to be the sponsors ? They have the natural authority over the children." No doubt they have. And therefore the

* The origin of the custom of sponsors is thus given by Austin :—"There were many that were converted from Paganism that were not well instructed in the principles of religion. And therefore, to testify their great care of those that by baptism they received into the church, in reference to their education, though their parents were Christian, and so their children had a right, yet some able and faithful men of known integrity and authority in the church were as sureties, together with the parents, to engage themselves to take care that they were instructed and educated according to the principles of that religion into which they were baptized." See the quotation in Strong on the Covenants, p. 221. Augustine also says, "Infants are brought to partake of spiritual grace, not so much by those in whose arms they are carried, as by the universal society of saints and believers."

parents are the very persons to provide the sponsors, and to give them, for that office, their own authority. And in this method many kindly, social, and uniting feelings are diffused and spread, and would be much more so, were the appointment more seriously regarded and observed. It is far more accordant with the enlarged spirit of love which characterizes the gospel, and which is of such a diffusive and expansive nature as to know no limits, and which views all Christians as the members of one body, to bring friends and neighbours, rather than parents, into an intimate spiritual relationship.

The real character of the sponsorship is to give, in a vivid form, that essential part of baptism which recognizes the responsibility of man under privileges. In adults, "the answer of a good conscience towards God" is requisite. 1 Peter iii. 21. In infants, that it might never be supposed that outward baptism was sufficient, and that the future repentance and faith which are requisite to salvation (Mark xvi. 16,) might be distinctly seen to be so, "they promise them both by their sureties; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform."

It is in complete accordance with that whole system which God has appointed, that almost every blessing comes to us through our fellow men, and that every gift is given to us to profit withal.

Were the engagement for the child's injury, objections might indeed be made against it; but the engagement is the child's real privilege and clear duty; and it is most significant to instruct the child in what course of conduct he is to insure the rich promises of God in baptism, of his being a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

The good of the child also makes it desirable that others besides the parents should have a special and immediate interest in its spiritual welfare; should feel an obligation to pray for it, to watch over it, to admonish it, and give it from time to time spiritual counsel and instruction.

The promise of the surety or sponsor must not be sup-

posed in any way to include responsibility for any subsequent unallowed wickedness of the child. If the sponsors have done their part in prayer and advice ; the child alone is answerable for its guilt in the neglect of the gospel and apostacy from Christ.

The ABUSE of this office is one great reason of the low esteem for it. When parents choose godfathers and godmothers merely from worldly motives, because of relationship, or influence and rank in society, without reference to spiritual character, what spiritual blessing can they hope to gain by such a choice ? The church has taken precautions by the following canon, to have duly-qualified sponsors : " No parent shall be urged to be present, nor be admitted to answer as godfather for his own child ; nor any godfather or godmother shall be suffered to make any other answer or speech, than by the Book of Common Prayer is prescribed in that behalf ; neither shall any person be admitted godfather or godmother to any child at christening or confirmation, before the said person so undertaking hath received the holy communion."

And when godfathers take upon them the office merely to oblige a friend, without any regard to their spiritual obligations, without prayer for their godchildren, without care whether they really have any suitable religious instruction in their early years, and without once perhaps in their whole youth speaking to them about the soul's health, what can be expected ?

The state of the visible church has sunk into such a cold formality in these things, that we far too much come under the awful character " of a form of godliness without the power." We cannot, by reason of our negligence and sinfulness, make head and firm front against the adversaries of truth ; nay, what is much more, we must adopt the words of Ezra in the time of Israel's revival in his day, " Behold we are before thee in our trespass ; for we cannot stand before thee because of this." Ezra ix. 15.

But is it right for sponsors to undertake that another shall fulfil their duty ? As " none can by any means re-

deem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him ;" is it not a mockery to promise that for the child which we are unable to make the child perform ?

Men do not reason so about worldly things. They do not quarrel with the will of a father, who appoints trustees for legacies to their children when of age, because the trustee is unable to compel the child to receive it. They do not find fault with their being executors to a will, or with the arrangements that executors or guardians make for the good of children. Were we as wise and believing in the things of the soul as we are in the things of the body—were we as desirous of spiritual blessings as we are of earthly riches—we should admire the wisdom and providence of that careful parent, the church to which we belong, in thus thinking of us ; and it would be another ground of attachment and endearment, instead of cavil and objection.

The faith of a stranger may be a blessing to those for whom he is interested. The centurion's servant was restored to health through his master's faith ; (Matt. viii. 10,) the man in the palsy was cured through the faith of those who brought him to Christ ! (Luke v. 20.) the dead Lazarus was raised through the application of his sisters to Jesus ; (John xi.) and these things may well encourage sponsors, in faith in God's promises to children, to undertake for them to walk according to those promises, in full faith in the love and righteousness of our heavenly parent.

In what way, then, may this appointment of the church be really revived and restored to efficiency ?

The difficulties throughout are very great. Difficulties in the minister's requiring communicants as sponsors ; difficulties in getting sponsors at all beside the parents ; difficulties in gaining really godly sponsors ; difficulties then in the sponsors fulfilling their duties. All discipline is so relaxed, every thing is so out of joint, that were it not that prayer is omnipotent, and "all things are possible to him that believeth," we might despair of remedy. We want some Shechaniah to strengthen the hands of the

ministry, as he did those of Ezra, saying, "We have trespassed against our God....Yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing....Let it be done according to the law. Arise, for this matter belongeth unto thee: we will also be with thee: be of good courage and do it." Ezra x. 2—4.

It must be admitted that a return to the principles and rules laid down by the church, after a long disuse, may be precipitate and hasty, from being too sudden, and thus may be injurious. Yet much may be done by MINISTERS, both in the public ministry of the word and sacrament, and in more private and personal intercourse, to recover the good regulations and original practice of the church, if the object be really aimed at, and earnestly and affectionately recommended.

We have here, however, chiefly to regard the DUTIES OF SPONSORS; those of parents will come under the chapter relating to them.

And let SPONSORS, if they have never seriously weighed the duty, pause before they undertake it rashly. It is an office of true Christian love, and a plain duty; and when undertaken in a just sense of its spiritual character, it is full of social and spiritual blessings. But to undertake a solemn duty thoughtlessly and carelessly, brings guilt upon us: to make it a matter of mere compliment, in order to oblige another, is to trifle with this sacred duty.

What then, is the duty of sponsors? not to make the child godly, not to give him renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil, or faith, or obedience; these are God's gifts, and cannot be given by any human being to another: "neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." No sponsor undertakes for the child's future holiness; but he does acknowledge for the child that its real interest and highest welfare is bound up in its future conduct, and he does by implication pledge himself to seek that welfare by promoting in the child, by all suitable means, the spirit of holiness.

Among these means are, remembrance of the child in intercessory prayer, personal consistency of Christian character and conduct, reproof of what is contrary to the gospel, encouraging of all that is agreeable to the gospel, attention to the religious instruction of the child, should it be neglected by those who have the charge of it, and seeing the child at length brought to confirmation and an attendance on the Lord's Supper.

It is our duty to promote the spiritual welfare of all around ; but there are many difficulties in doing it, which the office of sponsor takes out of the way, giving us a plea, and motive, and open door for directly addressing those for whom we have answered at the baptismal font.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONNECTION OF BAPTISM WITH SPIRITUAL REGENERATION.

GREAT is the wisdom and goodness of God in establishing by his own ordinance a connection between outward means and inward grace; a connection so intimate that the manna is called "spiritual meat," and the water from the rock "spiritual drink," and baptism with water "the laver of regeneration:" and yet, alas! through our unbelief and love of sin, these things are so separable that men may partake outwardly of the means, and God not be pleased with them, and their partaking may be preparatory only to their final overthrow. 1 Cor. x. 5.

As man consists both of body and spirit, and the body is the means by which truth is introduced to the spirit, so has God provided outward means for engaging our attention, and conveying truth and grace within. The attention is excited by what is visible; inquiry is called forth, faith is required, watchfulness is awakened, the mind is instructed in things invisible, prayer for the spiritual blessings thus signified is stirred up, and hope is enlivened. If the soul rejects such suitable and gracious means, it is left self-condemned, and without excuse; and if the soul receives the instruction and benefit designed by them, it has all the needful help for growing and enlarging in knowledge, and the enjoyment of God's grace and loving-kindness.

Baptism is full of instruction respecting the commence-

ment of the most important change in man's condition in this world ; and a change affecting his everlasting condition through eternity. I mean his regeneration or being born from above.

Regeneration, as a spiritual blessing obtained by the individual Christian, is a being born again, a new birth : as such it is in its highest sense, a birth from above through divine grace, quickening us to a new life, and raising us above our natural and carnal affections to the heavenly and spiritual affections of a holy life. It is called in the scriptures being *spirit*, as born of the Spirit ; being a partaker of the divine nature, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

It may be advantageous to clear our way to a full view of this truth, by viewing the progress of the doctrine as revealed in the word of God.

In the earlier part of the Old Testament we find but little of the real nature of this spiritual life unfolded to us. It is rather the character of the Old Testament to dwell on outward and visible manifestations, than on hidden principles of conduct. Yet no sooner had Adam fallen, than there was set before him in the threatening on the serpent, the hope of this spiritual life, " I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." He had incurred the penalty of death by yielding himself to the service of Satan ; he is here promised a life of hatred to that master and service, and a final victory over his dominion.

After that remarkable baptism of the deluge, and resurrection from it to a new world, in the promises then made to Noah, while man's spiritual death is expressed by " the imagination of his heart being evil from his youth," the hope of a better life seems set before him in the covenant made with Noah, and the recognition of " the image in which God made man," as a reason why he should not be slain.

The ordinance of circumcision given to Abraham was de-

signed more explicitly to shew the necessity of this life, and by the excision of the flesh to point out the entrance into a new life. Its inward meaning is set forth in varied passages both of the Old and of the New Testament. After the Lord had stated what he required of Israel, "to walk in all his ways, and to love him and serve him with all their heart, and with all their soul," and had shown the greatness of his love to them, and their seed after them, he adds, "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked;" and he afterwards promises to do this for them, with the express promise "that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx. 6. So the apostle tells the Philippians, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Besides circumcision, several of the rites of the law of Moses seem to have had a reference to this. We have already pointed out the baptism of the Old Testament. The two birds to be taken at the cleansing of the leper; one killed and the other dipped in its blood, and then set free, remarkably exhibit our death unto sin and our new birth unto righteousness. Lev. xvi.

The word *live* is so used in the Old Testament as to have naturally led the Israelites to the idea of a spiritual life. "He fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Here is a life beyond natural life, proceeding from the word of the living God clearly set before them. "So I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil"—where a course of obedience is called life, and a course of disobedience death. And in a similar truth they are exhorted—"Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life." No doubt temporal life and blessings were included, but a spiritual life also seems manifestly comprehended.

But when we come to the Psalms and the Prophets, we

have more opened to us,—the nature and reality of this new birth and spiritual life.

When David had fallen into fearful offences, and became awakened to the enormity of his sin, his earnest prayers were for a new creation within,—"Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." He brings before us here, with almost New Testament clearness, the new creation of the soul. The expression also of the 87th Psalm, "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there," after speaking in the previous verses of the accession of the great heathen nations to the church, seems to contain a prophetic intimation of that better and spiritual new birth which is peculiar to real believers. See also Isaiah xix. 25.

The prophets consoling Israel under their calamities and dispersions, again, with vivid light, open to them the new birth of the soul. How rich and full are the promises of Ezekiel—"From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." We have here distinctly all the features of the natural state of man, as filthy, idolatrous, and hard-hearted; and all the features of the spiritual man, as renewed, softened, having the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and made obedient to God. Similar promises occur, Ezek. xi. 19. Jer. xxxi. 33; xxxii. 39, 40. The expression in Habakkuk, so often quoted in the New Testament, is very forcible and emphatic—"Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the just shall live by his faith." Hab. ii. 4. There is then a life of faith distinct from the life of sense; there is a spiritual life revealed in the Old Testament, received through the word of God and his new-creating power, and marked emphatically by faith.

This new heart, this regeneration, this spiritual life is also EXPLICITLY PROMISED : "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx. 6. "And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them." Jer. xxxii. 39. Circumcision in its highest sense is promised. The thing signified as well as the sign, and the signified blessing with the use of the sign. Thus the sacrament becomes the seal and confirmation, the pledge and assurance of the promise of spiritual regeneration.

We see also a relation of ADOPTION AND OF SONSHIP promised in the Old Testament as a thing peculiar to the people of God. "Thus saith the Lord—Israel is my Son, even my first-born, and I say unto thee (to Pharaoh) let my son go that he may serve me." Exodus iv. 22, 23. To Israel "pertaineth the adoption." Rom. ix. 4. Their title is—"Ye are the children of the Lord your God." Deut. xiv. 1. "I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born." Jer. xxxi. 9. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt." We see in these expressions a peculiar relationship to God, and connection shewing special holiness and consecration to his service.

We have also, as seen in the warrant for infant baptism, the same blessings promised to the children as to their parents.

Thus large was the preparation of the Old Testament for that full announcement of the new birth which distinguishes the New Testament.

The fullest opening of this we have in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, on his coming to him as a divine Teacher, and to be instructed by him in the great truths of the gospel. Here is emphatically the seat of the doctrine of the new birth—"Jesus said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How

can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit* he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind (πνευμα or Spirit) bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit (πνευμα). Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things."

By this last inquiry our Lord manifestly shews, what the preceding statement has proved, that the doctrine of the new birth is contained in the Old Testament. The whole passage is full of weighty instruction. To imagine that it is to be confined to outward baptism, or mere outward reformation of moral conduct, or bare belief of particular truths, or external privileges which leave the soul destitute of salvation, is a most unworthy view of such solemn instruction, introduced with such dignity and repeated affirmation of the truth. It manifestly describes a gift of a spiritual substance, if we may so speak, imparted;

* The general voice of the Church has so universally applied this expression to baptism, that it ought justly to have great weight; and the similar mode of joining together (Titus iii. 5) the laver of regeneration, where the application to baptism is more clear, with the renewing of the Holy Ghost, shows that there is a real foundation for the general consent of the Church, as to baptism being a sign and means of regeneration. Yet the remarkable manner in which πνευμα is used, would almost lead us to think that in John iii. 5, our Lord intended to refer primarily to water and wind as descriptive of those great ideas which are comprehended in the gift of the Holy Ghost and of spiritual regeneration—himself explaining to Nicodemus the figure of wind as God's gracious and sovereign gift, the very means of continued life, and though unseen, producing the mightiest effects. In the following chapter he also equally explains the figure of water, as given by himself, with all its blessings, and overflowing in all those blessings of cleansing and refreshing which are connected with water literally, and with the Holy Spirit spiritually. John iv. 14. We may well hope that in the coming kingdom of Christ not only the water and the air, the bread and the wine, but everything earthly will be redeemed from common use, and all be sacraments and means of full communion with our God. Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

"that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is a real, vital, spiritual, all-important and heavenly change within, of which an entire new birth is the fittest emblem.* Though there be a distinct allusion to baptism, as its sign and means, yet the chief stress is laid on the vital change itself.

In the wonderful providence of God the whole creation abounds with spiritual instruction, and by visible things daily taking place, we may have the deepest and richest lessons of those invisible and spiritual truths which most

* The illustration of the figure by Mr. Scott is so valnable that I here give it; premising, however, that life exists before birth, and this is material to remember, for the fulness of our Lord's figure. "When a child is born into the world, though no new matter is brought into existence, yet a new creatnre is produced, and all its capacities, senses, and limbs are new [or at least brought into new exercise and use] and suited to the new life on which it has entered. Thus, when the grace of God changes the sinner's heart, the person is indeed the same; but he becomes a new man, possessed of new capacities, perceptions, affections, and dispositions, and is prepared to make a new nse of all his organs, senses, and faculties; he enters as *a new creature* into the spiritual world, and becomes capable of employment, and satisfactions to which he was before an ntter stranger. Ephes. ii. 4—10. 2 Cor. v. 17. When an infant is born, it has all the parts of a grown man, but they are in a feeble state, and need nourishment, attention, and time before they are grown to their proper size, and are fitted to perform their appropriate functions in a complete manner. Thns the regenerated sinner has [or having had] the substance of all right principles and holy dispositions communicated to his soul, but they are in an infantile state, and mnst grow np gradually, and with care and spiritual nourishment to maturity. This nourishment is provided, and 'the new born babe,' in the spiritnal as well as in the natnral world, desires, relishes and thrives upon it. 1 Peter ii. 1—3. No man can comprehend how the infant is formed in the womb; nor can any man know how God effects the new creating change in the sinner's heart. He works by means and instruments in both cases, and in each of them a real creation is effected by his omnipotonce. The birth of the infant precedes the exercise of its senses, and is the necessary introduction to all the actions of futnre life, so the new birth must precede all the actions of the spiritual life: till that has taken place the man can neither see, hear, walk, or work in a spiritnal manner. But, as when a living child is born it will certainly move and act, so when a sinner is born again he will repent, believe, obey, and worship."

Mr. Maurice, in his Treatise on the Kingdom of Christ, makes the following just remarks on the *new birth*: "That the body passes from the dark night of the womb into the light of ordinary day was the simplest view of physical birth; that the spirit comes out of the womb of natnre into the light of the Sun of Righteousness was the corresponding view of the new birth."

"The idea of a change of heart, where *heart* is taken for affections and desires, and when *change* is taken to be the turning of these desires from a wrong object to which they have been conformed, to a right object to which they are meant to be conformed, is surely a legitimate idea, and one not at all at variance with the idea of baptism as a covenant, bnt the fulfilment of its intent and the fruit of its promises: change of *nature*, in any other sense than this, no evangelical person who understands himself supposes to take place at conversion or any other period."

nearly concern our everlasting salvation. The birth of every child, its helpless and dependant state, the life which it has previously had, the new world into which it is introduced, its new existence there, its growth and the means of that growth, all furnish lively information respecting the regeneration of the soul.

Regeneration may be considered in the seed of life implanted, and in its manifestation in a life to be nourished and carried forward, as all life is, by suitable means and provision. In this respect it differs from conversion, which is the exertion of life existing, by the turning of the soul to the true and only Author and Giver of life.

Another parallel figure used in the scripture is the raising to life of those that are dead: "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus: unto good works."

We have here the same remarkable change in its highest sense fully brought before us. The sinful, deadly, and evil state in which we by nature live, the sole source of the change, the grace and new-creating power of God, the reality and magnitude of the change, a real quickening like that of life from death, and the end of it good works. There is no allusion to baptism here.

The frequent and solemn repetition of this truth, in connection with the absolute necessity of this vital change, ought deeply to impress every heart with its unspeakable weight and importance. Thus on another occasion our

Lord says—"Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 3. And so St. Paul speaks—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. (καινη κτισις, a new creation.) 2 Cor. v. 17.

The great source of this change, in its highest sense, is in the scriptures ascribed, not ordinarily to baptism, but first and mainly to the sovereign mercy, will and love of God, irrespective of any creature whatsoever—"As many as received him (Christ) to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

A chief instrument used of the Lord in this new birth, speaking still of its main substance, is the word of God. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit—being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter i. 22, 23. So the apostle tells the Corinthians, (whom, let us remember, he had purposely abstained from baptizing) claiming a peculiar spiritual relation on this account. 1 Cor. i. 14. "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." 1 Cor. iv. 15. St. James joins together the sovereignty of God as the cause, and the word of God as the instrument. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth (James i. 18.), that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." *

The effects of this new birth, as an inward principle of spiritual life, are not merely outward privileges and admission into church-fellowship and prayers and ordinances, but spiritual and transforming grace; and triumph over our great enemies, the world, the flesh, and the Devil. The

* It is a grievous perversion to apply Heb. xi. 40. only to baptism, and to speak of baptism as the only means of regeneration; and of Noah, as well as the other patriarchs, being unregenerate; or to state that Noah, Abraham, Daniel, and Job "were the faithful servants, but not as yet [under the Old Testament] the sons of God." The scripture positively declares, *To Israel pertained the adoption;* (Rom. ix. 4.) and of them he says, *Ye are the children of the Lord your God.* Deut. xiv. 1. Let none of us then be vainly puffed up in our fleshly mind, with a fancied exaltation in privilege, so as to depreciate the privileges of early believers.

Epistle of St. John is full of testimonies to this. "Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." 1 John ii. 29. "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren." 1 John iii. 14. "Every one that loveth is born of God." 1 John iv. 7. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." 1 John v. 1. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." 1 John v. 4. And still more full is the concluding expression, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." 1 John v. 18.

These are not the effects, unhappily and through man's unbelief, that we see invariably or generally in the baptized; but these scriptures shew that they are the effects of the new birth in its fullest sense.

May we then be most anxious to make that new birth sure to our souls—giving all diligence so to use all means, and especially faith in the grace set before us in baptism, and there assured to us, that we may attain it, if we have not yet attained it. The lessons St. James draws from God's sovereignty in this matter, are the duty of being "swift to hear—to lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

It is no fancy, no deluded imagination, no mere outward reformation, when one, who has been baptized in the name of Jesus, and lived only to the flesh, first receives "the word of God, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." It produces no mere temporary fictitious change, receiving one set of sentiments instead of another, but an entire moral revolution in the inward man; it turns the whole bent of his will, and the whole course of his affections, from earthly things to heavenly, from outward things only to spiritual also; it changes the whole character from selfishness to love, from high-mindedness to humility, from self-righteousness to contrition, from pleasure-

loving to self-sacrifice, from grovelling on earth to setting the affections on things above, from looking at things seen to looking at things unseen. It fills the mind with peace, the heart with joy, the lips with useful and holy and edifying words, and makes the whole life one course of blessedness to all around us, bringing glory in all to our Father which is in heaven.

The world is never left without remarkable instances of such mighty changes, to illustrate the sovereignty and riches of divine grace. The same blessed result indeed, more gradually but in innumerable cases, follows a right improvement of Christian baptism, through the faith, prayers, and careful discipline of Christian parents in a consistent education ; but without such a real change from nature to grace, manifested in a really Christian and holy life, baptism, however rightly administered, leaves the baptized only under heavier guilt.

We have hitherto chiefly spoken of regeneration in its highest sense as a spiritual blessing. But on a careful review of the Scriptures, it will be seen there is a fuller view of spiritual regeneration, which may be said to comprehend three things.

(1.) That on which we have hitherto spoken, which is its substance ; A NEW INWARD PRINCIPLE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE, which our Lord describes when he says, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ; he that eateth me, even he shall live by me ; " which St. Peter describes when he says, that by God's promises we are "partakers of the divine nature ;" and which St. John describes "as being born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God : " and "his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin. In this view regeneration is a secret, invisible work, and can be known only to God, except by its effects and visible fruits.

(2.) There is also a STATE OF SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGE in covenant grace, with admission to church privileges, and this as a sign and pledge of the inward principle of spiritual life : "the washing of regeneration" before "the renewing

of the Holy Ghost;" (Titus iii. 5.) "The being born of water before the being born of the Spirit," John iii. 5. The scripture speaks of this in calling men to baptism. "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts ii. 39. The scriptures speak thus of all the baptized as saved, raised with Christ, "putting on Christ, delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." (Col. i. 13.) God in this meets us with manifestations of his readiness to communicate his highest blessings to us, and earnestly as it were calls for our faith in his promises. In this view the church of Christ admits and recognizes the regeneration of the baptized.*

(3.) There is farther a state of MANIFESTED REGENERATION before men; "the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," so the "fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth;" and the Ephesians are told to put "on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" and the Romans are exhorted to be "transformed by the renewing of their minds." In this view regeneration is known and read of all men.

Has not much of the controversy and obscurity arisen from confounding these separate parts of regeneration? All these have an intimate connection in the holy scripture: nor can we conceive of real spiritual life, without divine grace freely bestowed, in unmerited privilege first originating it, and holy fruits following and manifesting it. Regeneration, as an entrance into church privileges, always

* "We are not to consider," Bishop Jewell says, "the grace of God so tied to the ministration of the sacraments, that if any be prevented by death, so that he cannot be received into the fellowship thereof, he should therefore he thought to be damned. For many have suffered death for God's cause, for their faith in Christ, who never were baptized, yet are they reckoned and are indeed blessed martyrs." Bishop Jewell gives extracts here from Ambrose, Augustine, and Theodoret, proving this. Augustine justly says, "He is not deprived from the partaking and benefit of the sacrament, so long as he finds in himself that thing that the sacrament signifies." Bishop Jewell adds, "By these few it may appear that the sacrament makes not a Christian, but is a seal and assurance unto all that receive it of the grace of God, unless they make themselves unworthy thereof, and that no man may despise this holy ordinance, and keep back his infants from baptism."

accompanies baptism ; whatever be the future course of the baptized, it is the manner of God's speaking in the New Testament, (Compare Gal. iii. 26 ; v. 4. Heb. iii. 14. Col. i. 21—23.), as it was in the Old Testament, to consider and address all outwardly in the church of God as belonging to God, and to plead with them on this ground, even when by their inconsistencies they have proved that they have forfeited the blessing, and that it does not really belong to them, (Isaiah l. 1 ; Jer. iii. 1, 4, 8.) and we have here a scriptural justification of our church catechism, and our baptismal service. Regeneration, as a new inward principle of spiritual life, is to the faith of the adult assured by baptism, and to the faith of the Christian parent in God's promises to his seed, assured for the child : it may be viewed as having gone before baptism in the previous faith and penitence of the adult, and in the covenant of God with the believer as to his offspring ; and it may be viewed as accompanying baptism by God's own seal applied to the baptized, according to his own word ; and also it may be viewed as following baptism in open manifestation before men, by the holy life of the adult, and the personal repentance and faith of the child when it comes of age.*

The great truth witnessed in INFANT baptism is, that our spiritual life wholly originates in the grace of God, first going before, and without works, or deserving, on the part of man, bestowing the new birth.

The great truth witnessed in ADULT baptism on the other hand, is man's responsibility connected with that grace. We still see God abundant in grace, willing to bestow it, but we see also the actual reception of grace and unfolding of regeneration in the glad welcome of a willing heart before baptism.

It is only where both the state of spiritual privilege and manifested fruit of the spirit exist, that we have full scrip-

* There is a long and laboured work by an old writer, C. Burges, on the Baptismal Regeneration of Elect Infants, endeavouring to shew, that to the elect there is always the regeneration in baptism which issues in final salvation; but it is far from satisfactory to the author. It does not seem to recognize the largeness of God's love set before us in the Scriptures.

tural warrant for viewing persons as regenerate in its complete sense. Where there is a state of Christian privilege, that is an actual admission by the appointed ordinance into the church, in a subject at present incapable of moral acts or spiritual graces, there is a ground both from God's promises to children, and from their right to the ordinance, for using the language of their being regenerate, and there is a presumption of faith and charity in favour of inward regeneration.

But regeneration, having the sense of spiritual privilege as well as spiritual life ;* not solely meaning a state of spiritual life ; but including also a state of admission to church privileges ; and it being our Lord's intention thus to connect the outward rite and the inward grace in completed regeneration, we have no full warrant for using the term regenerate in its largest sense without baptism and its inward grace also : where there is spiritual life only, it may rightly be used, but the scriptural or ecclesiastical warrant is indirect and not express. Jewell remarks, 'Baptism is the badge and cognizance of every Christian. If any be not baptized, but lacks the mark of God's fold, we cannot discern him to be one of the flock. If any man take not the seal of regeneration, we cannot say he is born the child of God.' Where there are marks of living faith without baptism, the visible seal of the covenant, there is the most satisfactory reason for administering the sacrament ; but without it there is not, in the complete sense of scripture, the whole of regeneration. Indeed, as the man born of God must keep all the commands of God, and baptism is among those commands, he has not, till he is baptized, this evidence of regeneration. Yet, on the other hand, the author cannot enter into the statement, 'that it is nowhere implied that any Christian had not been regenerated, or could hereafter be so ;' meaning by Christian, I suppose, one baptized, and in the outward church. The apostle Peter explicitly says, after the baptism of Simon Magus, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this

* See the Author's Divine Warning.

matter, for thy heart is not right with God." Acts viii. 21—23. The apostle John says of others, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 John ii. 19. The apostle Paul supposed that a baptized woman may be living in pleasure, and so dead while she lives. 1 Tim. v. 6. The general invitation of scripture to careless men in the external church is, "Hear, and your soul shall live." Isaiah lv. 3. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Ephes. v. 14. Thus careful are the scriptures not to identify spiritual life with circumcision or baptism merely.

It is not to be denied that in the early ages of the church, baptism and regeneration were very frequently viewed as synonymous, and there must have been a reason for this. Thus Justin the Martyr, speaking of the way in which persons were made Christians, after mentioning their instruction and willingness to live according to the gospel, says, 'they are brought to a place of water, and there regenerated after the same manner with ourselves.' Similar language is common among the fathers, and it is clear that they applied the term regeneration to baptism, as the scriptures do.

We shall gain a key to this language, by duly remembering two great and leading truths of the gospel; the reality of divine grace as an object of faith, and the accountableness of man under the exhibition of that grace. These truths are contrast truths, but perfectly harmonious; they shew salvation wholly of grace, and perdition wholly of ourselves, and yet man employed, in the exercise of all his faculties, under the heavenly leading of grace.

The first truth is THE REALITY OF DIVINE GRACE AS AN OBJECT OF FAITH. This is exhibited distinctly in the ordinance of baptism, which points out all those benefits that we have already noticed as God's free gifts to man. The fuller and the greater our faith in this grace, the fuller and

greater the blessings which we shall receive: "according to your faith, be it unto you." Matt. ix. 29.

The second truth to be here noticed is our ACCOUNTABLENESS FOR GOD'S GIFT TO US. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." 1 Cor. xii. 7. We are to be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter iv. 10. And here comes in all the danger of neglecting so great salvation: the liability of the sacraments to abuse, the inefficiency of ordinances without faith, and the presumption of faith resting on the ordinance, and not rising to the ordainer, but making an idol of the sacrament.

It will be evident to a careful student of the word of God, that to meet the imperfections of man, and the infancy and growth of the church, God imparts truth by degrees, and successively, according as it is needed.

Thus the grace of God, connected with a visible rite, is a prior truth to the danger of the abuse of that rite, and to the need of its right reception. This then is the truth vividly impressed on the earlier church. Circumcision was ordained as a pledge of God's covenant love to Abraham (Gen. xvii. 10); its spiritual character, and the duty of circumcising the heart, were unfolded only after the many rebellions of Israel on their way to Canaan. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart." Deut. x. 16. In this spirit the apostle calls the judaizing teachers "the concision," and adds, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Phil. iii. 2, 3. The name of Israel was identified by the Jews with a literal descent from Jacob. It was only in the latter time of the Jewish dispensation, when men rested in the outward form, that the wicked were told that they were "rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah." Isaiah i. 10. "Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite." (Ezekiel xvi. 3); and were fully and distinctly instructed in the nature of the spiritual seed of Abraham. "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abra-

ham—ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." John viii. 39—44. They are "not all Israel which are of Israel—the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Rom. ix. 6—8. And thus it was with baptism and the regenerate. The connection of the grace of God with the visible rite was vividly impressed on the earlier church. Few were baptized in those stormy days of trial and persecution, who were not genuine Christians. Regeneration was with their baptism, as circumcision of the spirit was with outward circumcision: the baptized were the regenerate, as the literal Israel were supposed to be the true Israel. It was only when the abuse of the ordinance reached its height, that the inefficiency of the outward rite, without the actual reception of the grace set forth in it, was unfolded.

Each part of the truth is needful for the spiritual welfare of the church; and it seems to have been in the wisdom of God that each part was exhibited alone. Thus they were more distinctly laid before men, and could be more clearly discerned. The reality and freeness of grace were seen in baptismal regeneration; the accountableness of man was seen in the actual limitation of regeneration to real receivers, exercising faith in the grace of the sacrament. Both parts of these divine truths being needful, we see the goodness of God to us, and the increased safety of the church against the dangers of abuse in both parts being maintained. We need the vivid faith of the early church in the grace of the ordinance. We need the jealousy of the Protestant and Reformed churches against superstitious dependence on the outward rite. The early church had a real corrective from the far larger proportion of baptisms being among adults, and from the jealous care and watchfulness with which they prepared them for this ordinance. Justin observes, 'As many as are persuaded and believe that the things taught and said by us are true, and moreover take upon them to live accordingly, are taught to pray, and ask of God with fastings, forgiveness of their former sins; we pray together, and fasting for and with

them; and then, and not till then, they are brought to a place of water.'

When once the abuse of infant baptism became so widespread, and almost universal, faith disregarded, and the outward ordinance only trusted in; and, the profession of Christianity having become general, there was no corrective in frequent and adult baptism, the providence of God suffered a body to arise in the church, who denied all efficacy of baptism whatever, but on profession of faith, and thus virtually set aside the reality of divine grace in that ordinance, as an object of faith. Just as when the church sunk into idolatry, it pleased God to suffer an impostor to arise holding one great truth; and Mahomet was the rod of Christians, charging them justly with infidelity, because they were idolatrous: so Baptists rebuked the *opus operatum* of Popery and formality, by teaching the responsibility of man in regard to baptism.

And again, as another corrective, the Providence of God suffered another body to arise in a later period—the Society of Friends, who set aside outward rites in baptism and the Lord's Supper, and confined themselves simply to the spiritual blessings, and yet have by no means gained with special advantage spirituality and inward godliness; thus furnishing his church with another warning of the danger of over-valuing the outward ordinance, in its tendency of leading us to lose the ordinance or means of grace itself.

We may thus see two great mistakes, to which different classes in the church of Christ tend. One to mistake the sign, means, and pledge, for the end itself, and so lose the end. And another, so to regard the end only, as to slight the sign, means, and pledge; and thus as effectually lose the end too. If Satan can prevail, in either of these ways, to the abuse or neglect of God's own ordinance, the object of that malignant foe is attained.

There is then an important connection between the ordinance OF BAPTISM AND SPIRITUAL REGENERATION. We have seen that our Lord at the time, at the very time, when

his disciples were baptizing, told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;" thus in the general sentiment of the early church, connecting the birth of water and of the Spirit. St. Paul, in the expression, "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration," also distinctly alludes to baptism. We have seen that the expressions in the epistles respecting baptism correspond to this. St. Paul tells the Romans, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death." He also assures the Colossians, "In Christ also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God."

These passages of scripture are conclusive, in proof of such a special connection between baptism and regeneration; and this as being, in some respects, more marked in this ordinance than in the other means of grace; and shewing us that there is in every baptism a privilege conferred, leading on to full regeneration, when followed out in a consistent life. They furnish a ground for special faith, with reference to the grace of regeneration, as the blessing which God designs should be signified, manifested, and confirmed in baptism: and so objectively set before and given to the child, as not only to admit him to church privileges, but to be the ground of future faith. Regeneration is indeed the sovereign act of God's grace. His children are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God:" and his word of promise is the great instrument of their new birth. Yet have we, from these promises and testimonies, the general warrant to expect this blessing to be manifested and confirmed in the use of baptism as his means. It is an ordinance specially appropriated in his word, as "a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." The sov-

ereignty of God, always equitable and righteous, is seen in withholding this confirming grace, where there is no faith in his promise, and no real prayer for his blessing; and the same sovereignty, always rich in mercy, is seen in bestowing increase of faith and prayer, and manifested regeneration, to make his ordinance effectual, to all who really trust in his word and truly call on his name.

It is, however, perfectly clear from the scriptures, that baptism is not universally attended with the spiritual change of regeneration. Where there is no real faith in exercise, it is righteous in God to withhold his grace. By the parallel rite of circumcision, the apostle Paul has illustrated this truth. "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." We have only to change the terms circumcision and Jew into baptism and Christian, to see how there may be this rite outwardly without any real change.

As to the baptismal regeneration of infants; let us remember that the only limitation in administering ordinances which seal blessings to those who receive them, is moral unfitness; but in the case of infants there is no such unfitness. The only thing here is to guard against what may take place hereafter: and the answer of the church as to the reason of their baptism, while it furnishes a limitation to the expression of their regeneration, shews also the ground on which they are admitted to baptism. Infants are baptized because they promise both repentance and faith by their sureties, which promise themselves are bound to perform. It is clear here that regeneration is left to be perfected by the subsequent repentance and faith of the baptized.

In fact, in the case of infants, baptism says visibly, by an outward sign, in the langnage of the church copying the Redeemer, and speaking in his name what he said when on earth, "Suffer the little children to come unto

me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven :" if the kingdom of heaven belongs to such (*των γαρ τοιουτων εστιν η βασιλεια των ουρανων*), well may the seal of confirmation be applied in baptism to them. The baptism of infants who have not personal preparation for baptism, the pronouncing those to be regenerate who have not the evidences of regeneration, accords with the gracious character of the gospel, which anticipates by grace our qualifications, and of which infant baptism is, as we have seen, a glowing manifestation. There all is grace throughout: grace objectively in God's promises, and love to the seed of the godly, before it is seen subjectively in its fruits in man. Our Lord says, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven ;" and admits them, as we have seen, as suitable subjects for baptism, according to the fulness of his grace, before they have any visible manifestation of meetness. Not that they are not afterwards to attain that meetness, but that their faith may be helped by this manifestation of his first love to them, in gaining that spiritual regeneration, which baptism signifies and on God's part seals to them. Inseparable baptismal and spiritual regeneration is the *opus operatum* of Popery. Antipædo-baptism is the very opposite error, tending to self-righteous bondage. The no-water-baptism of the Friend is really casting away God's appointed means of grace ; and, as we have seen, by no means secures that body from formality and worldliness. Regeneration by promise, sealed in the baptism of infants, and wrought out in faith in their subsequent lives, is the doctrine of God's word, and fully loaded with all the rich blessings of the gospel of Christ to every real believer.

And in the case of adults, who before baptism testify repentance and faith, it is an appointed ordinance for strengthening those graces, and assuring to them their regeneration. The minister of God, acting on the authority of the divine commission in baptizing, his ministerial act is to the right receiver a token on the part of God of his bestowing covenant blessings, and a pledge of the regene-

ration of the person baptized. Thus circumcision in the flesh was a seal or token of covenant-blessings, (Rom. iv. 11.), and an emblem of the circumcision of the heart. Deut. x. 16; xxx. 6.

The lengthened controversies on this subject have frequently been attended with opposite errors; one identifying baptism and regeneration, and the other making baptism a bare sign. Our Reformers kept equally clear of both. It is a wide-wasting mischief to make baptism and regeneration the same thing; this is substantially to ascribe, to the minister who baptizes, that power which the scriptures exclusively appropriate to God (John i. 12.); and it is directly to contradict the article of the Church of England which calls baptism a sign of regeneration, conveying grace and spiritual blessings: a sign and the thing signified cannot be the same thing. And yet is there in the promise of God sufficient warrant both for the prayer of faith, and after that prayer, for the thanksgiving of faith. For, on the other hand, God's ordinances are never bare signs. If faith be absent, they greatly increase guilt in the partakers of them; as the guilt of Simon Magus was increased by his baptism, which left him in the gall of bitterness. But if faith be present, a blessing is in the ordinance. The faith of parents may bring inestimable blessings on their children (Mark ix. 23, 24; x. 16.); and we are justly called on in the exercise of this faith to thank God for the blessing; as Jehoshaphat, after prayer and God's promise, no longer hesitates, before the victory over his enemies, to offer the song of praise and thanksgiving in the full triumph of faith. See 2 Chron. xx. 21. Many of the Psalms glow in the close of them with the same exercise of faith.

But if regeneration be thus connected with baptism, how is it that we see so many baptized children so manifestly unregenerate? He that is "born of God overcometh the world, worketh righteousness, loves the children of God," and has his affections set on things above; and we see, alas! innumerable multitudes that are baptized, to whom

none of these characters belong. The real root of this grievous failure of God's ordinance is man's unbelief, as it was in the Israelites' not entering Canaan. Heb. iii. 19. The sacrament is made void through unbelief. To save and to bless, there must be more than the sign. There must be in the *adult* the answer of a good conscience towords God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ; and in the case of the *infant,* the child must be brought by the parent or sponsor in the faith of God's promises to children, and trained up in faith for his service, and by personal faith and penitence manifest completed regeneration, or baptism saves not. These things will at once account, —when we look at the way in which baptism is too often administered and received,—for the wide failure in obtaining its benefits, and enforce the great practical lesson, " Let us, therefore, fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Heb. iv. i.

Having thus gone through the more thorny paths of controversy, let us in the close more practically view the subject, addressing different characters.

1. THOSE WHO have been baptized, but MANIFEST NO SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION. They know not the rich grace of God exhibited to them in that ordinance ; they prize not salvation by the death of Jesus ; they love the world and the things of the world ; all their religion is taught by the precepts of men, and springs not from the fear of God. At present they are dead in trespasses, as if they had never been baptized. We say to them, as Ezekiel said to the circumcised Jews living without the circumcision of the Spirit, justifying the evangelical churches of Christ which have ever adopted this language, " Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions ; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ? " Baptism unimproved is wholly unavailing, except indeed to the increase of guilt and of

condemnation for abused mercies. But on the other hand, think not that the season of mercy is past for you. There are most solemn warnings of the danger of apostacy, (Heb. vi. 4—6 ; x. 26—29.), and it is a most fearful guilt thus to "tread under foot," as you have done, "the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith you have been sanctified, an unholy thing, and to do despite to the Spirit of grace." Beware of an approach to this, and at once cast away all unbelief, and flee from the wrath to come. Now is the accepted time ; now is the day of salvation. Simon Magus had, after his baptism, sinned in a most aggravated degree ; and yet even in his extreme case he is not left in despair ; but he is exhorted, "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Acts viii. 22.* Jesus is still a Saviour for you. He still stands and says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Begin to do, without delay, what you should have begun from infancy, and be assured of the realizing to you the promise, "They that seek me early shall find me." "Be swift to hear" God's word ; it is the grand instrument for your conversion ; "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Be diligent, then, to redeem the time. See the freedom of grace in God's first meeting you in baptism ; see your own abuse of that grace in your sad

* The doctrine of sin after baptism being unpardonable, is most unscriptural. The sons of the parent of the Prodigal we must suppose to have been circumcised, and what could be more vile than the conduct of the Prodigal, and yet what could be more gracious than his immediate reception on his real return, and the full assurance instantly of favour? It is true that every increase of privilege involves an increase of responsibility and of danger, if rejected, in proportion to the light we have given to us with that privilege. And it is most painfully true, that there may be such a fulness of intellectual light so continually received without any fruit of grace brought forth, that the conscience may be seared, the heart hardened, and it becomes impossible for such to renew them again to repentance. But to confine this to *the baptized*, and suppose that *being enlightened* means only baptism, whether faith be exercised or not, and to apply it to all the baptized, is to set aside all spirituality of the law, all sensibility of sin under which the highest saints are groaning, all the riches and fulness of gospel forgiveness of all manner of sin, and either to bring us back to the bondage from which Christ has delivered us, or to set men at liberty to sin without remorse.

neglect of it, and let his "goodness at length lead you to repentance." Even "adulterers and adulteresses" in spiritual guilt are invited: "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." James iv. 8. Your baptism may yet be to you the completed blessing of regeneration, if you now join to it that new heart and new spirit which God has promised to give to them that ask; (Ezek. xxxvi.) if you now apply to the Saviour for that baptism of the Holy Ghost which it is his peculiar prerogative to bestow. Mark i. 8.

Our subject also addresses those whose spiritual state manifests that they ARE REGENERATE: they are raised to heavenly things; they have received Christ; they love the brethren and all men; they overcome the world; they are kept from sin. To such the apostle speaks, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." 1 Peter ii. 2, 3. Regeneration, like our first birth, not only admits of growth, but implies and requires growth. The Corinthians could not be addressed as spiritual, but as carnal, even as babes in Christ, who required milk and not meat. 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. The Hebrews ought to have grown up "to be teachers," but required "teaching again the first principles of the oracles of God" and were "become such as had need of milk, and not of strong meat." Heb. v. 12. May we then seek to grow in the divine life, in faith, hope, and love: in devotion, humility, and heavenly-mindedness; in knowledge of the mysteries of the gospel, and corresponding lowliness, meekness, and loving-kindness to all men. May we be so "skilful in the word of righteousness" as to profit by "the strong meat that belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Heb. v. 13, 14.

Let us not rest also in the mere discernment of the nature and means and value of regeneration; but go on to discern and enjoy the rich privileges and glorious hopes of the regenerate, as belonging to the church and household of God,

having all his precious promises assured to them, the gifts and graces of his Spirit, the adoption into his family, the heavenly inheritance, the assurance of his favour and love, and the lively expectation of his coming kingdom and glory. Let us discern also, and practise, the holy precepts, which are the very paths of happiness in which God calls them to live; the walk with God on earth which He enables them to lead; and the being raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places, which is their common blessedness now while on their way to those mansions in our Father's house, where Christ is even now preparing a place for us. It is but a little thing to know the beginning of regeneration well, and not to walk in all its freedom and heavenly-mindedness now, and in the full light and joy of its approaching everlasting reward.

Supposing then, through the unbelief of the parents and the church, and the subsequent impenitence and unbelief of the baptized child, it becomes manifest, by a course of open sin, that at baptism they have not received spiritual life, are they then to be called regenerate, and is it a departure from the faith of God's word of promise in baptism, to tell them, "Ye must be born again?" This is neither the view of the scriptures nor of the Church of England. In the Old Testament, the circumcised Jew was told, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xviii. 31. In the New Testament, St. John explicitly states of such, "They went out from us, but they were not of us" (1 John ii. 19): and the apostle tells us of another birth requisite for such, besides that laver of regeneration, in which they had already put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you; I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you." Gal. iv. 19, 20. So, in the Homily for Whitsunday, our church shews at length the nature of inward regeneration in real sanctification and holiness, and, without alluding to baptism, adds, "Such is the power of the Holy Ghost to regenerate men, and as it were to bring them forth anew, so that they shall be nothing like the men they

were before. Neither doth he think it sufficient inwardly to work the spiritual birth of man, unless he do also dwell and abide in them." *

Let us not then lose the substance in the sign and means; but make, by God's blessing, the sign, and means and pledge, the great help to our gaining the full blessing which our God had in store for us, in grace now and glory hereafter.

And should we have been baptized, without receiving the full spiritual blessing, let us not suppose God's grace to be so limited as to be confined to that means only of regeneration. Very far is this from the case. Simon Magus, baptized, and found in the gall of bitterness, is called to repent. Those Galatians, of whom the apostle stood in doubt, he labours anew for their spiritual birth. The door is yet abundantly open, only enter without delay. Believe in the name of Jesus, and you will be truly born again of the will of God. John i. 12. Ephes. ii. 4—13. Welcome his preached gospel into your heart, and you will be born again really and effectually. 1 Peter i. 22—25. James i. 17, 18. God is your loving Father, and with outstretched neck, as it were, is looking out for your return. Luke xv. 20. You have sinned greatly indeed, in not believing his grace, as set forth in baptism, but there are still stores of grace in Christ Jesus for you. O hasten to Christ without hesitation, lest the day of grace pass without your receiving his salvation.

* There is a beautiful history of St. John preserved to us by Eusebius, as originally given by Clemens Alexandrinus. St. John coming to a city, said to have been Smyrna, and seeing a youth with whom he was interested, he committed him to the Bishop of that city, who educated, and at length BAPTIZED him, and then took less care of him. The youth, after this got into bad company, and increasing in wickedness, at last became a commander-in-chief of a troop of thieves. John, after this, coming again to Smyrna, inquired of the Bishop about the charge deposited with him, and hearing his history, he immediately got a guide to the mountain where the robbers resorted, found the young man, brought him back, and with many prayers, and much comfort of God's word, he was again restored to the Church of Christ. The whole story is full of touching interest, and may be seen at length in the history of Eusebius, lib. iii. chap. 23. But the close of it shews how fully the primitive church held that a man might be baptized, and yet regenerate at a future time; for the account is thus closed:—"He departed not, as they say, until he had restored him to the Church, having thereby shewn a great example of true repentance, an illustrious instance of true REGENERATION, and a trophy of a conspicuous resurrection." Clemens Alexandrinus flourished at the close of the second century.

CHAPTER X.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS BEFORE BAPTISM.

Christians have universally found the importance and benefit of preparation for the second sacrament of Christ, the Lord's supper, and equally important and beneficial is it, not to rush hastily, and without preparation, to the first sacrament of our Lord, Baptism. The Jews were baptized of John in Jordan, "confessing their sins." Matt. iii. 6. The first baptized in the Christian church were "pricked in their hearts," and cried out, "What must we do to be saved," and then "they that gladly received the word were baptized." Acts ii. 37—41.

Previous humiliation, self-reflection, self-examination, and holy resolution, become those about to be baptized, or bringing children to baptism. Our Lord bids his people to count all the cost of following him, before they take up the profession of the faith. Luke xiv. 25—33. The Church of England takes much care on this subject in the baptism of adults, requiring that they be sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, and that they be duly exhorted to prepare themselves with prayers and fastings for the receiving of this holy sacrament. Baptism, if duly improved, would never be administered or received without a manifest revival and refreshing of the whole congregation.

To assist the reader in this, the following meditations and prayers have been prepared.

MEDITATIONS PREVIOUS TO ADULT BAPTISM.

Acts viii. 36.—*What doth hinder me to be baptized ?*

Many are the hindrances which my own evil heart and an evil world would raise against my fulfilling this important duty. The chief, however, may be resolved into an unbelieving view of the depth of God's wisdom, in providing a visible ordinance for communicating his invisible grace ; and a want of entire submission to his word ;—into the inward love of sin, and the preference of this world to Christ. Let me see, then, my blindness, and how destitute I am of any right views of my darkness, dependence, and sinfulness by nature ; and let me joyfully surrender my own fancied wisdom to the wisdom which is from above. Let me see in its true length and breadth, height and depth, that loving-kindness which has been manifested to one created by God the Father, redeemed by God the Son, and having the promise of the indwelling of God the Holy Ghost ! What though my companions and the world around me mock ; what though it seem strange to them to make so marked and public a confession of the Lord Jesus Christ ; well may I go forward under the divine assurance, " I, even I, am he that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass ; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth ; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy, and where is the fury of the oppressor ? " And as to supposed advantages by continuance in sin, what is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, but darkness, vexation, sorrow, misery, and everlasting ruin, under the deceitful mask of outward and present beauty, glory, and happiness ? How can I be happy in violating the will of my best friend and benefactor, who has all power in heaven and earth ? Can He

who died for me design anything in his laws to me but my best good? Impossible. I will yield myself, then, to his will, unreservedly and wholly.

And Oh! what a glorious truth have I to believe, in believing with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God! In that truth I see a love in God, not only wholly unparalleled and unequalled, but inconceivably vast and glorious. Through eternity shall I contemplate with admiration the amazing mystery of love, that the Most High, in the person of his Son, should stoop from heaven to earth, and be a child and be in poverty; and be a man of sorrows, and not have where to lay his head; and be mocked and spit upon, and be crucified and die, and lie in the grave! Unutterable, boundless pity, grace, and love to sinners! and also how fearful must be the evil, destructiveness, and vileness of sin! Believing this in the heart, well may I set my face like a flint against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and rejoice in a public and open occasion of testifying to all, that I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and desire to be his in life and his in death.

Acts xvi. 33.—*And was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*

I admire the promptitude of the jailor. Immediately, the very same night; he would make no delay. While the terrors of the earthquake gave energy to his resolution; while the presence of the apostle afforded him the opportunity; without consulting flesh and blood, he fixed himself at once in the service of his heavenly master. And the apostle, seeing all the difficulties through which he had broken, and the firmness and decision which marked his faith, admitted him at once into the Christian church, and thus the infant church at Philippi grew and was strengthened.

Thus, too, would I fix myself for time and for eternity without delay, and with every possible promptitude, in the full conviction that this is the best, this is the happiest choice that I could make, and that I can never be grateful

enough to my Father in heaven for opening this door of admission into his kingdom, and giving me the desire and the power to enter in by faith. O, give me only that true repentance for all my sin, and that real and lively faith, which are the characteristics of all thy people.

MEDITATIONS SUITED TO A SPONSOR BEFORE BAPTISM.

Psalm lxxvi. 11.—*Vow and pay unto the Lord your God. Let all that be round about Him, bring presents to Him that ought to be feared.*

In this spirit would I undertake that spiritual office to which I have been called. O help me not to regard it as a mere matter of form, nor as an act only of family friendship and kindness, and still less as a matter of unconcern and indifference; but give me grace to view it as comprehending, on the part of this child, a solemn vow and promise to the Lord of all, connected with incalculable blessings: and to see that respecting this vow and promise I have a serious and most important part to take. It becomes my duty, by prayer, by advice, by watchful attention, to care for the soul's health of this child, so that it may not lose, but have assured to it all the benefits which God has promised to his people.

In the law, God gave this serious warning—"When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thou shalt not slack to pay it, for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee." Deut. xxiii. 21, 22. May I attend to this warning, and not hastily undertake what I have no design to perform.

And yet, on the other hand, if I am to "give to him that asketh;" to "do good to all men, and specially to the household of faith;" if the wisdom that is from above is "easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and of good fruits," then should I joyfully deny myself for the good of others, and share a parent's cares, and burdens, and willingly consent to be the sponsor for their child.

Lord, then I would at this time bring to thee, who ought to be feared, a self-sacrificing, willing, and devoted heart, treading in the steps of that divine Redeemer who was our surety, and bore our burdens on the tree.

MEDITATIONS SUITED TO PARENTS PREVIOUS TO INFANT BAPTISM.

Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.—*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Here is the original institution of baptism; and blessed be God, it affords rich consolation and great encouragement for the baptism of my children.

First, my Saviour has all power in heaven and earth. He made my children, he preserves them, he gives them to me. He who died for them on the tree, in the fulness of his love, has now all power to save and to bless them.

Next He commands his ministers to go into all the world; he begins, he commissions the work of grace and goodness, and there are no limits to his love: the good tidings of great joy are for all people.

Then the word "nations" (τα εθνη, the nations, or Gentiles) is so large as to include children (a most important part of every nation). Like the word in the parallel place, "every creature," it clearly shews to the eye of faith that my Saviour would not have them excluded.

Again, the word teach (or make disciples of) is appropriate to the situation of children, (see Matt. x. 42; xviii. 1—10,) as well as of grown-up persons: and admits of their being brought into the school of Christ by baptism, as the first step of their discipleship; and though it be in the lowest form, happy is each scholar in this school.

And, lastly, in the one full and comprehensive name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I have my child brought into relationship with all the rich blessings which God, my

God, under these titles, so full of love, grace, and communion, has provided for us sinful creatures. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift ! It is equally my solemn duty and my high privilege to bring my children to be thus admitted into the church of Christ.

Gen. xvii 7, 8.—*I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.*

Thanks more than I can ntter be unto God for this gracious covenant, now nearly 4000 years old, but as sure and fresh and full of blessings, as if I heard it anew from the Lord of all himself. Blessed be God, the law given by Moses so many years afterwards, could not weaken its gracious provisions. "The covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was 430 years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." The death of Christ on the tree was for this end—"That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise through faith." And what more as a Christian parent, can I wish for, than God's covenant engagement to be my God, and not only my God, but when I look on my dear children, he allows me to add he has covenanted with me, the moment I believe his promises, to be their God also. Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Increase my faith. Think, O my soul, of God as our God, and all his perfections our blessedness for ever ; his wisdom guiding, his power protecting, his righteousness assuring, his riches to be enjoyed, his grace pardoning, his love providing, his presence never leaving, his glory our eternal home : a God to thee, my own God,—what a portion, what an inheritance is here ! All resurrection-glory is assured by this ! "I am the God of Abraham." Luke xx. 37. All spiritual life and blessings are given in this (John xiv. 19. Psalm. lxxxiv. 11.) "Because I live, ye shall live also." All help in difficulty is pledged by this

(Heb. xiii. 5, 6.)—"The Lord is my helper." How important my personal faith and devotedness that this covenant may stand fast with my children too! God give me grace greatly to prize and diligently to use those promises of grace to my offspring, both by simple faith, fervent prayer, lively hope, and consistently training them up as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. In the strength of this promise may it be the joy of my heart to see God's own seal in baptism applied to my child at this time.

Acts ii. 38, 39.—*Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

To secure the promise of the Divine Spirit to my children—how precious, how important! Most plain is that promise—"I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and very gracious is the connection here implied between repentance, baptism, remission of sins, the promise of the Spirit, and the interest of my children in these things. Lord, accompany then thine ordinance with thine own effectual grace to my child. Blessed be thy name that I was in my early years thus brought into thy church, and numbered with thy people. And, O thou who didst make the faith of a parent requisite (Mark ix. 23.) before thou didst heal the sick child of that parent, give me faith in thy promises, lest, through my unbelief, my child suffer loss. Give me also true repentance for my own inconsistencies and for all my sins, however committed and whenever committed. Help me to see thy love in every thing, and that thou hast provided in Jesus, thine own Son, for the full remission of all sins, and grace to overcome sin; thus there is no excuse for our sinning against thee, nor for one hard or rebellious thought against our God; and sin against commandments so good and love so abounding has become exceeding sinful, altogether baseness and abomination, as well as misery and ruin.

Thus myself a partaker of thy grace, I plead with thee, that the promise is also to my children, as well as to all afar off. O my God, the love which prompted thee to make the promise, will also, when that promise is pleaded in faith and prayer, lead thee to the performance of all good to them. I bring my child then to baptism, seeing the largeness of thy love and the riches of thy grace, not only to thy people, but also to their offspring, and earnestly desiring for mine, above every thing else, spiritual, heavenly and eternal blessings.

Mark x. 14.—*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.*

Most kind and compassionate to every Christian parent is this declaration of the mind of Christ! What can be more important in the eyes of the Christian, full of tender love to his children, and deeply sensible that the one grand blessing for them is, that they belong to the kingdom of God, than this gracious invitation and this blessed assurance. Connecting this also with the circumcision of infants under the Jewish dispensation, and the parallel rite of baptism (Col. ii. 11, 12.) under the Christian, I do with joyful confidence of heart in the grace and love of God bring my child to baptism. Delightful is the privilege of bringing my little ones into the outward visible kingdom, in the blessed hope of their being found ultimately numbered in the inward kingdom here and the heavenly kingdom hereafter, and of their fully now sharing in all the fellowship of prayer of thy churches through the world. What grace and loveliness has my Saviour, by this kind reception of little children, manifested! How should it fill my heart with the sense of his overflowing goodness.

"Of such is the kingdom of God;" then my own dear child, brought to Jesus, belongs to this kingdom. And I have this unspeakable treasure, to train up as a member of Christ, a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, for the everlasting kingdom yet to come. O may

I guard the invaluable treasure with jealous care, lest by my earthliness and worldliness, by my sinfulness and misconduct, my child suffer damage, and lose that kingdom to which it already belongs, in the loving heart of that gracious Redeemer, and to which it is openly to be admitted by his own divine institution.

Acts xvi. 15.—*And she was baptized and her household.*

This was the first baptism, by the apostle, of the Gentiles in Europe ; the first after he had seen that remarkable vision—"Come over into Macedonia and help us." How interesting to us Europeans, and how doubly so to us European parents is it, that by this first baptism of the divinely-inspired apostle, the household, as well as the head of the family was introduced to the Christian church ! God gave here a gracious earnest of that fulness of blessing then in store for Europe, when its kingdoms should become nationally Christian, and a blessed encouragement to all Christian families, to have every member of the family, ("all his," Acts xvi. 33.) "all his house," ("the household of Stephanus," 1 Cor. i. 16.) brought to baptism. In that emblem and figure of the whole family of God, a private family, the Christian parent would not have one out of the covenant of God's love, and the token of that covenant which is baptism. How accordant then with the very character and large grace of the gospel is infant baptism ! Only grant, heavenly Father, the true baptism of thine own Spirit, that from its earliest years dedicated to thee, my child may be claimed by the Spirit for thine own.

PRAYER FOR AN ADULT BEFORE BAPTISM.

I thank thee, O Lord, my heavenly Father, that thou hast called me to the knowledge of thy Son Jesus Christ, and salvation through his blood. I bless thy holy name that the joyful sound of the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God, making known to me Jesus the Saviour of

sinners, ever reached my ears, and by thy grace was received into my heart. Give me herein clearer and fuller views of my own sinfulness, in rebelling against thee, the God of love, and more confiding and enlarged views of thy grace and goodness, in the sufferings of thine own Son, for my salvation. Grant me also such a lively faith in the Son of God, that I may be strengthened to a complete victory over the world, and all its many temptations.

O Lord, my God and my salvation, I do indeed intreat of thee effectual help to renounce all thine enemies and mine, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; I do entreat of thee strength and power to overcome the world, and the flesh, and the devil. I do entreat of thee such grace in my baptism that it may be blessed of thee, to lead me on, hereafter, to far more decision of character, far more self-sacrifice. O give me those grateful, enlarged, and joyful exertions to do thy will, benefit my fellow-creatures, and glorify in all things thy great name, which flow from the sweet assurance of thy love and the joy of thy salvation. May I be, and live, only for thee, my God, now and ever.

Help me also to look beyond the mere outward administration of this ordinance, and the baptism by thine appointed minister, to that baptism which is the work, not of the minister, but only of the heavenly Master. O Lord Jesus, it is thine alone to baptize with the Holy Ghost, thus baptize me in this sacrament; yea, baptize me each day afresh into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Thus may I continually be growing in the joyful heartfelt knowledge of the true God, continually be partaking more of his character and blessedness, in all the relations in which he stands to me, and daily may I manifest more and more of his Spirit, and be more and more conformed to his image.

O hear and answer me, for my Redeemer's sake. Amen.

PRAYER FOR SPONSORS BEFORE BAPTISM.

Almighty Father, whose name is Love, and who delightest that we should shew forth thy love to others, help me joyfully to undertake this office of love to which I am now called, even to be a sponsor for the spiritual welfare of the child of another. And first let me afresh give myself to Thee, from whom comes every good I have, and then, feeling that I am thine, may I see that it is thy grace I have to manifest towards all others, promising in a good conscience for this infant, because I feel and rejoice in the blessings which thy gospel has brought to myself. And, O put it into my heart by watchfulness, prayer, and readiness to use opportunities, to do always what lies in me for the furtherance of the spiritual and everlasting life of this child. Hear me, for Christ's sake.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS BEFORE BAPTISM.

Father of all fathers, Lord of heaven and earth, thou hast given us a dear child, with a never-dying soul, to bring up for thee; and with this precious gift, O how many are the gifts of thy love; thou sparedst not thine only Son, but he died for us, and has redeemed us and our children from our sins, by his own blood; thou givest thy Holy Spirit to them that ask, and hast promised that Spirit to our offspring; we come to thee with grateful and believing hearts, that we, and all those belonging to us may, by a true faith, be living and happy partakers of all thy grace. Especially we pray for this child, whom we desire to bring to thy holy baptism, that thou thyself wilt sanctify it to thyself from this time forth for evermore, that our dear child may be wholly thine, protected by thy power, guided by thy wisdom, guarded by thy providence, kept by thy grace, upheld by thy strength, and blessed by thy love for ever, through Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE BAPTISMAL SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND THE INSTRUCTION GIVEN IN ITS CATECHISM.

In considering the church services, we will begin by explaining the catechetical instruction given on baptism, as mistakes here are very common, and have given occasion to much unfounded reproach against the established church.

The catechism commences with the following statement : 'My godfathers and godmothers gave me my Christian name in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.'

There are two leading mistakes made on this assertion of our catechism : one, that these terms describe only a mere relative change, without any spiritual blessedness ; and the other, that they describe the whole of what scripture intends by regeneration, a passing from death unto life, and completed spiritual life. Neither of these appear to have been the real meaning of our Reformers, nor of the inspired writers, who use similar expressions, as we have seen, respecting the baptized, of whom they afterwards speak as standing in doubt. Compare Gal. iii. 26—29, and iv. 13, 19, 20. They did not mean a mere relative change ; the terms are too distinct and strong for this, but a federal or covenant standing before God and the church, imparting great spiritual privileges, and involving corresponding duties : or, as it is expressed afterwards, a call to a state of

salvation, to continue in which to our life's end, grace is needful. It may, or it may not be, that the whole of what we call spiritual regeneration is imparted at Baptism. There is much ground, from many delightful scripture statements connecting baptism and regeneration, (John iii. 5 ; Rom. vi. 3, 4 ; 1 Cor. vi. 11 ; Col. ii. 10—13 ; Titus iii. 4—7.) for faith and prayer and hope as to the largest blessing ; but, seeing experience abundantly proves, what the scriptures in the case of Simon Magus had indeed made clear, that many are baptized who have not the main scriptural marks of completed regeneration, the language of our church, like the language of scripture, is to be viewed as expressing that baptism conveys federal or covenant privileges and engagements, and not of itself regeneration in its inward power and complete blessedness. The shell is to be distinguished from the kernel, though so needful for its formation and growth.

The use of such language in the scripture runs through the Bible. In the Old Testament the parallel ordinance of circumcision was administered as a rite with similar grace to baptism (Col. ii. 10—13) : and yet we perpetually find the Israelites, after the outward rite, charged as being spiritually, and therefore really, uncircumcised. Lev. xxvi. 41, 42. Deut. x. 16 : xxx. 6. Jer. iv. 4 ; vi. 10 ; ix. 25. Acts vii. 51. There may be a literal circumcision and federal privilege thence derived, without the true circumcision (Rom. ii. 28, 29 ; ix. 4) ; and a person may become, by a federal covenant, a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, without attaining the spiritual blessedness designed by this covenant.*

See how the Israelites were called " an holy people unto the Lord (Deut. vii. 6 ; xiv. 2, 21), and the children of the Lord " their God (Deut. xiv. 1) ; and yet are described elsewhere as " a seed of evil doers, and children that are corrupters," (Isaiah i. 2—6.), " who have not known God,"

* The Author has explained this distinction more at length in his " Divine Warning," Appendix II. pp. 315—321.

and "are sottish children," (Jer. iv. 22.) and "backsliding" children. Jer. iii. 14, 22. We read again in the New Testament, that "the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness." Matt. viii. 12. The branches may be in the vine, members of Christ, and yet bear no fruit, and be taken away. John xv. 2. Esau was circumcised and had the birthright; yet being a profane person, he sold the birth-right of his inheritance and forfeited the blessing. Heb. xii. 16, 17. How vividly the apostle Paul brings in contrast his deep grief in the Jews rejecting salvation, with the most lively sense of their spiritual privileges. Rom. ix. 1—5. Such language shews with what justice and scriptural warrant our church applies the words of our catechism to all the baptized. They are, in an important sense, as brought into covenant with God openly in the sight of his church, members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven; and in the assurance of these blessings sealed to them in baptism, are pledged to repentance and faith, to which, and to the increase of which, God's previous grace then assured to them is a mighty help. Let them truly repent and believe, and then the blessings are truly and fully realized.

Through the overflowing goodness of God, which has connected his grace with the outward means, to multiply the opportunities of its being received by us, both baptism and regeneration are now complex terms, embracing more than the bare letter intimates. Baptism now means more than washing with water. By God's appointment as a solemn ordinance of his church, it is not merely washing, but "the laver of regeneration," embracing two things—public washing with water, and a promise of God, the very means of spiritual regeneration; as is shewn in the close of the Catechism, and is already explained.

Regeneration itself also is a complex term, including a state of federal privileges, and a new and spiritual life and blessedness in the sight of God; and also the state of final glory in the world to come. God has in mercy so

joined these things together, that one duly improved is a step to another; and the rejection of the privilege awfully manifests more and more his righteousness in punishing such aggravated guilt. How often does our Lord insist on that great principle of his gospel—"Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." Matt. xiii. 12; xxv. 29. Mark iv. 25. Luke viii. 18; xii. 48. Now is that precious accepted time and day of salvation, in which we have a blessed season of grace for rising through living faith out of our fallen state to the full enjoyment of that blessedness which our outward privileges signify, and which God, by them, when rightly received, will communicate. The church without faith may clothe itself in fancied possessions, and all the while be naked, and wretched, and miserable. The church, with faith in God's grace and love, rises from earth to heaven, is adopted into the family of God, joins the company of his sons, and will finally share the glories of the only-begotten.

It has been supposed by many that the expressions in the catechism and baptismal service might be so changed as to leave it doubtful whether the spiritual blessings were really obtained. The author, for his own part, cannot but think that were the expressions to be neutralized so as to be left more doubtful and uncertain, it would tend to keep out of sight the true ground of infant baptism, and to weaken living faith in God's promises, and keep our federal promises hidden from us. Our service would no longer be a spiritual worship in faith and hope; just in proportion as you lowered the expressions of spiritual blessings attained, you would lower the faith of the church, in the free promises of God's grace in Christ Jesus to the children of believers. Doubt and wavering is strongly condemned in the scriptures, and our services now, in their right use, are far removed from that wavering faith which gains nothing. "Let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." James i. 6, 7.

The true remedy for the incongruity between the sound catechism of our church and its beautiful baptismal service, and the actual state of the baptized and of those who join in that service, is, not lowering the expressions of our formularies to meet the lowered tone of our congregations and their weak belief in the promises. The scriptural remedy is of another kind, the faithful and full preaching of the doctrines of the gospel, and the unspeakable blessings and privileges God has in his covenants of promise assured to the believer and his children. Let these be realized and all is harmonious and consistent. The office of the church is not to part with its savour, but to be the salt of the earth ; not to hide its light, but to put it on a candlestick. And for ever blessed be our God that our Reformers had that faith in God's words, not to flinch from the full statement and exhibition of the riches of his grace.

There are three forms of service provided by our church for baptism. One for public baptism of infants to be used in the church ; another for private baptism of children in houses ; and a third for public baptism of such as are of riper years. In considering first, the form for the public baptism of infants, most of what is material to be observed on these forms may be noticed. A few remarks will then be made on the other forms.

Some rubrical directions express the desire of the church for the administration of baptism, ' on Sundays and other holy days when the most number of people come together : as well for that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's church, as also because, in the baptism of infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in his baptism.'

It is greatly to be desired that this rubric were generally observed. The author has had an opportunity in his ministry for many years, both in London and in the country, of seeing the truly beneficial effects of public baptism in the midst of divine service. It has been the

entire revival of a sacrament. So far from being wearisome to the congregation on Sundays on which it is administered, public baptism has occasioned a manifest increase in the number of attendants. It has excited lively interest in the great truths set before us in baptism. It has furnished many a motive for Christian practice, and many a ground of earnest appeal in the public ministry, which would otherwise either not have been brought forward or not have been felt. The objections of its lengthening the service, and becoming formal, apply not where the congregation as here is interested in what is going on. We feel not that to be long in which our mind is really engaged, and our affections are excited.

A chief benefit of this, however, is the increase of prayer for the baptized. Little do the rich who have their children baptized in state in a drawing-room, or the poor who wish to have a baptism in their cottage, without the trouble of a public service, consider the loss their dear babe sustains. As long since as the third century, Tertullian remarked, 'We can with greater profit beg the divine grace upon the baptized person, when there is a number present in the public congregation.' It is one of the better canons of the Constantinopolitan Council, in the time of Justinian, 'Let not baptism be celebrated in any oratory within a private house, but they that would partake of an undefiled baptism, let them go to the public churches, and there let them enjoy this gift.'

This baptismal service of the Church of England is almost wholly taken from old liturgies, some of which may be traced to very early ages of Christianity. Mr. Palmer, in his valuable Antiquities of the English Ritual, has shown that "the greater portion of our prayers have been continually retained and used by the Church of England for more than 1200 years." Surely this may lead us to prize and hold fast a treasure thus endeared to us. The compilation of our Liturgy was referred to learned and pious men, who had before them all the Liturgies then in use, as well as the most ancient Liturgies. They selected

whatever appeared most valuable, omitting many things unauthorized by the word of God, and retaining only what appeared to them desirable for edification. The Liturgy thus prepared was submitted to Convocation, and then, on their approval, to the Parliament, by whom it was sanctioned in these terms, "They gave unto the king most hearty and lowly thanks for it, and for his most godly travail in collecting and gathering together the said archbishop, bishops, and learned men, and for the godly prayers, orders, rites and ceremonies in the said book, and considered the honour of God and the great quietness which by the grace of God would ensue upon it; and finally concluded the book was such that it would give occasion to every honest man most willingly to embrace it."*

(1.) THE MINISTRATION OF THE PUBLIC BAPTISM OF INFANTS.

In considering the Baptismal Service, we will give the service as it is in the Book of Common Prayer, and add such remarks as may seem useful.

It opens with the following inquiry—

Hath this Child been already baptized, or no?

This inquiry is founded on the *one baptism* of scripture (Ephes. iv. 5); like the initiatory rite of circumcision: baptism being but once administered.

¶ *If they answer*, No: *Then shall the Priest proceed as followeth.*

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin: and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost; I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous mercy he will grant to *this Child* that thing which by nature *he* cannot have; that *he* may be baptized with Water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy Church, and be made *a lively member* of the same.

* See Strype's Memorials, vol. i. p. 135. It was first printed in June, 1548.

The clear statement of our fallen nature (Psalm li. 5; Ephes. ii. 3), most properly precedes that ordinance which is one of the first steps of our deliverance from it. The connection of baptism and regeneration (John iii. 5. Titus iii. 5.) has already been shown. The earnest calls made on the congregation to pray for the child, shew the advantage of public baptism; and the blessings to be asked for are suitable to the occasion.

¶ *Then shall the Priest say,*

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing hy water; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel thy people through the Red Sea, figuring thereby thy holy Baptism; and hy the Baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, didst sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin; We heseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon *this Child*; wash *him* and sanctify *him* with the holy Ghost; that *he*, being delivered from thy wrath, may he received into the ark of Christ's Church; and heing stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this trouhlesome world, that finally *he* may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with thee, world without end: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The scriptural fulness and beautiful simplicity and comprehensiveness of this prayer are very manifest. It is partly founded on a prayer in the Gothic Missal. Happy is that minister and that congregation where such prayers are truly and spiritually, by the whole assembled church, offered up to God. The passages of scripture on which this prayer is founded are, 1 Peter iii. 20, 21. 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. Matt. iii. 13—15. 1 Peter v. 9. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Heb. xi. 16. Rev. xxii. 5.

Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that need, the helper of all that flee to thee for succour, the life of them that helieve, and the resurrection of the dead; We call upon thee for *this infant*, that *he* coming to thy holy Baptism, may receive remission of *his* sins hy spiritual regeneration. Receive *him*, O Lord, as thou hast promised by

thy well-beloved Son, saying, Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall he opened unto you: So give now unto us that ask: let us that seek find; open the gate unto us that knock; that *this Infant* may enjoy the everlasting henediction of thy heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

This prayer was used in the Liturgies of Salisbury and York, before the Reformation, and its use can be traced during upwards of 900 years. The fervent petitions of this prayer well precede the triumphant language of faith in the subsequent prayers. The scriptural warrants for the prayer are Psalm lxxii. 12; ix. 9. John xi. 25, 26. Acts ii. 38. Matt. vii. 7. Gal. iii. 27—29.

¶ *Then shall the people stand up, and the Priest shall say.*

Hear the words of the Gospel, written by St. *Mark*, in the tenth chapter, at the thirteenth verse.

They hrought young children to Christ, that he should tonch them: and his disciples rebuked those that hrought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forhid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

¶ *After the Gospel is read, the Minister shall make this brief Exhortation upon the words of the Gospel.*

Beloved, ye hear in this Gospel the words of our Saviour Christ, that he commanded the children to he hronght unto him; how he hlamed those that would have kept them from him; how he exhorteth all men to follow their innocency. Ye perceive how by his outward gesture and deed he declared his good will toward them; for he embraced them in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and hlessed them. Douht ye not, therefore, hut earnestly helieve, that he will likewise favourably receive *this* present *Infant*; that he will embrace *him* with the arms of his mercy; that he will give unto *him* the hless-ing of eternal life, and make *him partaker* of his everlasting kingdom. Wherefore we heing thus persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards *this Infant*, declared by his Son Jesus Christ; and nothing douhting hut that he favourahly alloweth this charitable work of our's in bringing *this Infant* to his holy Baptism; let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks unto him, and say,

The language of our Saviour here recorded was also used for a similar occasion in the ancient Liturgies last mentioned. The exhortation is remarkably adapted to the occasion, and excellently applies our Lord's conduct to the baptism of infants, which it is so well calculated to confirm and illustrate. It is also well suited for the comfort and edification of all attending the service.

Almighty and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give thee humble thanks, for that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee: increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give thy holy Spirit to *this Infant*, that *he* may be born again, and be made *an heir* of everlasting salvation; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

This thanksgiving for ourselves, and prayer for the baptized, is founded on several directions and statements of scripture. 1 Peter ii. 9. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Cor. i. 21. 2 Peter iii. 18. 2 Thess. i. 3—5. Titus iii. 5—7.

¶ *Then shall the Priest speak unto the Godfathers and Godmothers on this wise.*

Dearly beloved, ye have brought *this Child* here to be baptized, ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive *him*, to release *him* of *his* sins, to sanctify *him* with the Holy Ghost, to give *him* the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life. Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his Gospel to grant all these things that ye have prayed for: which promise he, for his part, will most surely keep and perform.

The church here reviews the course already gone through to strengthen the faith of the worshippers, and to lead us to anticipate by faith his grace. "While they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isa. lxv. 24. Let us then call to mind the special promises made to prayer. "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark xi. 24. And then it calls upon us to add to our faith virtue and every other grace, as 2 Peter i. 5—7.

Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ, *this Infant* must also faithfully, for *his* part, promise by you that are *his* sureties, (until *he* come of age to take it upon *himself*,) that *he* will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy Word, and obediently keep his commandments.

I demand therefore,

Dost thou, in the name of this Child, renounce the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?

Answer. I renounce them all.

Minister

Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth?

And in Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son our Lord? And that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; that he went down into hell, and also did rise again the third day; that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; and from thence shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead?

And dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholick Church; the Communion of Saints; the Remission of sins; the Resurrection of the flesh; and everlasting life after death?

Answer. All this I stedfastly believe.

Minister.

Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?

Answer. That is my desire.

Minister.

Wilt thou then obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of thy life?

Answer. I will.

We have here the renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and the profession of faith, desire of baptism, and purpose of obedience on the part of the child. The things themselves renounced, are renounced according to plain directions of God's word, 1 John iii. 8, 9; ii. 15, 16; v. 19. Rom. viii. 12—14. Titus ii. 12—14. 1 Cor. vii. 31. Acts viii. 37. Matt. xix. 17. Rom. vi. 2—14. It appears (see Bishop Hall on Isaiah viii. 2.) that Isaiah

called witnesses to the name given to his son at his circumcision.

The grounds on which sponsors are appointed, and act for the infant, have been considered. The renunciation and profession are taken from the most ancient Liturgies in existence, and have been practised probably from the very commencement of Christianity. Acts ii. 41 ; viii. 37. How instructive it really is to have these plain, great, and all-important truths, thus prominently, distinctly, and repeatedly, on so impressive an occasion, brought forward, must be obvious ! Many a humble, plain, simple Christian has been savingly taught eternal truths by these practical and weighty appeals and answers.

¶ *Then shall the Priest say,*

O merciful God, grant that the old Adam in *this Child* may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in *him*. *Amen.*

Grant that all carnal affections may die in *him*, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in *him*. *Amen.*

Grant that *he* may have power and strength to have victory, and to triumph, against the devil, the world, and the flesh. *Amen.*

Grant that whosoever is here dedicated to thee by our office and ministry, may also be endued with heavenly virtues, and everlastingly rewarded, through thy mercy, O blessed Lord God, who dost live, and govern all things, world without end. *Amen.*

These passages are taken from the Gallican Missal. As to substance, they are found in the most ancient monuments of the Eastern and Western churches. They are truly scriptural. Ephes. iv. 20—24. Rom. viii. 6. Ephes. vi. 10—13. 1 John v. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 5, 6. 2 Cor. iv. 7. Mark xvi. 16. Psalm ciii. 19.

Almighty, everliving God, whose most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, did shed out of his most precious side both water and blood, and gave commandment to his disciples, that they should go teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; Regard, we beseech thee, the supplications of this congregation ; sanctify this Water to the mystical washing away of sin : and grant that this *Child* now

to be baptized therein may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Church has adopted here the Salisbury Manual, with an addition from the Alexandrian : leaving out the additions of oil and other things, which the Roman church makes. The scriptural foundations of the prayer are, John xix. 34. Matt. xxviii. 19. 1 John v. 14. Matt. xviii. 20. Acts xxii. 16. John i. 16.

¶ *Then shall the Priest take the child into his hand and shall say to the Godfathers, and Godmothers, Name this child ; and then naming it after them (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it) he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily, saying.*

N. I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it, saying the aforesaid words,

N. I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The substance of the words is found in all the Christian rituals. They plainly follow our Lord's express directions, Matt. xxviii. 19. And, oh how rich is the blessing of thus putting the divine name and blessing on our children, by our Saviour's own direction. Num. vi. 27.

¶ *Then the Priest shall say.*

We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, [*Here the Priest shall make a cross upon the child's forehead*] and do sign *him* with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter *he* shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil ; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto *his* life's end. Amen.

The Bobiensan Missal, known to be above 1100 years old, has these similar words : " Receive the sign of the cross both in the forehead and in the heart. Always be faithful. Enter the temple of God. Worship God the Father Almighty and Jesus Christ his Son, who is coming to judge

the quick and the dead and the world by fire, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen."

Well did the church retain so ancient, so simple, and yet so significant a sign of our Christian state and warfare, under the divine direction to her, "let all things be done decently and in order." For suitable scriptures, see 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; xii. 13. Gal. vi. 14. Ephes. vi. 10—13. 1 John v. 4. Rom. viii. 12—14. 2 Tim. ii. 3. Many other rites used in ancient churches, such as washing, giving a taste of milk and honey, and clothing with white robes, have been discontinued as inexpedient and cumbersome.

¶ *Then shall the Priest say,*

Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that *this child is* by baptism regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits; and with one accord make our prayers unto him, that *he* may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.

The last-mentioned ancient missal, 1100 years old, has the following similar exhortation; "Let us give praise and thanksgiving to God, dearly beloved brethren, that he has vouchsafed to increase the congregation of his church by our dear brethren now baptized. Therefore let us ask mercy of God, that they may bring that holy baptism which they have received, undefiled, uncorrupted, and unspotted, before the judgment-seat of Christ."

The term regenerate is founded on the expression, "born of water," used by our Lord, and "laver of regeneration," used by the apostle in reference to baptism. The expressions are not stronger than the Scriptures. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 27.

¶ *Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer, all kneeling,*

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

This most comprehensive prayer is well introduced after

fresh members have thus been brought into the Saviour's family.

¶ *Then shall the Priest say,*

We yield thee most hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate *this Infant* with thy holy Spirit, to receive *him* for thine own *Child* by adoption, and to incorporate *him* into thy holy Church. And humbly we beseech thee to grant, that *he* being dead unto sin, and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man, and utterly abolish the whole body of sin ; and that, as *he is* made *partaker* of the death of thy Son, *he* may also be *partaker* of his resurrection ; so that finally, with the residue of thy holy Church, *he* may be *an inheritor* of thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The same ancient missal last mentioned has this prayer after baptism :—" Lord God Almighty, preserve in thy servants whom thou hast commanded to be born again of water and of the Holy Spirit, that holy baptism which they have received, and vouchsafe to complete it to the glory of thy name ; that thy grace may always advance in them, and the grace which they have first received from thy gift, they may keep in the uprightness of their lives."

The objections made to the prayer of our church appear to me to be founded on a partial view of scripture. The scriptures speak in the very same general terms :—" By one spirit are we ALL baptized into one body, and have been ALL made to drink into ONE SPIRIT." 1 Cor. xii. 13, 27. And yet among these Corinthians were those guilty of schisms, divisions, drunkenness at the Lord's table, and other fearful sins. Yet in general he calls them, " sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, coming behind in no gift (1 Cor. i. 2, 5, 7) ; the spirit of God dwelling in them as the temple of the living God (2 Cor. vi. 16) ; washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor. vi. 11) ; the Lord's freemen, and the Lord's servants." So it is said even of those Israelites, with many of whom God was not well pleased, " They were ALL baptized unto Moses in the cloud ; they did ALL eat the same spiritual meat." So the apostle

tells the Galatians, of some of whom he stood in doubt, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. iii. 27. The objection to the baptismal service is in truth an objection to St. Paul.

If spiritual birth be so frequently, through our unbelief and wickedness, "like the untimely birth of a woman that they may not see the sun," (Psalm lviii. 8), let not the church of God on that account lower the scale of its faith, and of its hope and prayer and praise also; but rather seek to raise the dying graces of the church, that there may be strength to bring forth spiritual children to the Lord. Let our hopes rise to the level of the scriptures. Rom. vi. 5, 6. Heb. xii. 22, 23. We see in the case of Jehoshaphat, that thanksgiving should be joined with faith for a blessing, and that, even before the full evidence of the blessing. 2 Chron. xx. 20—22. Jehoshaphat's praise to the Lord justifies our praise. Had we equal faith, we should have similar praise, and similar success in our praise. Let us not blame the language of the church, but the real unbelief of our own hearts, and seek to gain that triumphant spirit of faith which realizes God's own promises, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." Then does faith beautifully manifest its genuine character, when it realizes the unseen, gives substance to mere promises, and enjoys the blessing by anticipation and thanksgiving. The same faith we have to exercise to obtain all the sweetest and fullest joys of the gospel. "All things are yours:—Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

¶ *Then, all standing up, the Minister shall make this exhortation to the Godfathers and Godmothers.*

Forasmuch as *this child hath* promised by you *his* sureties to renounce the devil and all his works, to believe in God, and to serve him; ye must remember, that it is your parts and duties to see that *this Infant* be taught, so soon as *he* shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession *he hath* made by you. And that *he* may know these things the better, ye shall call upon *him* to hear Sermons; and

chiefly ye shall provide, that *he* may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; and that *this Child* may be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life; remembering alway, that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession: which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him: that, as he died, and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness: continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.

In this very striking address we have, as Mr. Budd has justly observed, "the system of Christian education expressed by our church in a few short hints, which do indeed contain the pith and essence of all just education, conducted on Christian principles. The total and unsparing renunciation of all sin, and the persevering cultivation of all holiness as a delightful privilege, as well as a necessary duty—this is the animating system of our church, which stamps it with a truly gospel character, which gives energy to faith, animation to hope, perseverance to love, and joy to duty. The chief and main provision for the child's instruction contains the creed, or leading Articles of faith which he is to believe. The Ten Commandments, or the will of God, which is to form his practice, and the Lord's Prayer, which asks for every temporal and spiritual blessing, and the gift of that grace, without which he can neither effectually believe the gospel, nor acceptably practice the gospel." See Rom. vi. 3—14.

¶ *Then shall he add and say,*

Ye are to take care that *this child* be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as *he* can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.

The importance of the religious instruction of the young is frequently pressed in the scriptures. Deut. iv. 10; vi. 7. Prov. xxii. 6. Ephes. vi. 4. 1 Cor. iii. 2. The duty of keeping the vows here made is plain. Eccles. v. 4. The advantage of hearing God's truth is great. Rom. x. 14.

That the rite of confirmation is one of great practical benefit every clergyman's experience has proved, wherever it has been duly observed. Intimations of it are given in the scriptures (Acts viii. 17, 18, 19. Heb. vi. 2.) on occasions where the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were bestowed, and it was practised by all the churches of Christ, from the earliest ages.

It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.

To take away all scruple concerning the use of the sign of the Cross in Baptism: the true explication thereof, and the just reasons for the retaining of it, may be seen in the xxxth Canon, first published in the Year MDCIV.

The certainty of the salvation of baptized infants is founded on the express promises connected with baptism (John iii. 2—5. Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16. Gal. iii. 27. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Rom. vi. 3. Col. ii. 12. 1 Peter iii. 21); and also on our Lord's words. Matt. xix. 14.

The reasons on which the 30th canon founds the use of the cross, are its practice from the earliest age, and its adoption by the church of England, not as a part of the sacrament, which is wholly complete without it; all idea of power in the sign of the cross being renounced, but as a mere outward ceremony and honourable badge of our profession. The canon closes with calling to our consideration, that "things of themselves indifferent do in some sort alter their natures, when they are either commanded or forbidden by a lawful magistrate, and may not be omitted at every man's pleasure contrary to the law, when they be commanded; nor used when they be prohibited." It would be well if this great principle, so clearly laid out in the holy scriptures (Rom. xiii. 1—6), were more seen and felt by all Christians.

(2.) THE MINISTRATION OF BAPTISM TO SUCH AS ARE OF RIPER YEARS.

While, in the baptism of infants the fulness and freedom

of God's grace in first coming to us with blessings is largely displayed, in the baptism of adults the responsibility of man in connection with the same grace is unfolded to us. In their baptism we have man concurring with God's grace, no doubt first from the preventing grace of God making him willing, and working with him when he has the will, —but still man, an accountable being, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. The service for the baptism of adults corresponds with this change of aspect in divine truth. Instead of parents and sponsors, we have the baptized coming himself and answering for himself in the presence of chosen witnesses.

The exhortation and prayers before the reading of the scripture are the same as in infant baptism. The portion of scripture taken for adult baptism (instead of Mark x. 13—16.) is John iii. 1—8.

The exhortation founded on this scripture, is as follows :

Beloved, ye hear in this gospel the express words of our Saviour Christ, that except a man he born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Wherehy ye may perceive the great necessity of this Sacrament, where it may he had. Likewise, immediately hefore his ascension into heaven, (as we read in the last chapter of Saint Mark's Gospel,) he gave command to his disciples, saying, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that helieveth and is haptized shall he saved; but he that helieveth not shall he damned. Which also sheweth unto us the great benefit we reap therehy. For which cause Saint Peter the Apostle, when upon his first preaching of the Gospel many were pricked at the heart, and said to him and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? replied and said unto them, Repent, and he haptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to yon and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words exhorted he them, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. For as the same Apostle testifieth in another place, even haptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Doubt ye not, therefore, hut earnestly helieve that he will favourahly receive *these* present *persons* truly repenting and coming unto him hy faith;

that he will grant *them* remission of *their* sins, and bestow upon *them* the Holy Ghost; that he will give *them* the blessing of eternal life, and make *them partakers* of his everlasting kingdom.

Wherefore we being thus persuaded of the good will of our heavenly Father towards *these persons*, declared by his Son Jesus Christ; let us faithfully and devoutly give thanks to him, and say,

Almighty and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give thee humble thanks, for that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee: Increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore. Give thy holy Spirit to *these persons*, that *they* may be born again, and be made *heirs* of everlasting salvation; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The prayer that the adult may be born again, not only shews that the church has yet no evidence before it of this regeneration, but that it considers, as our Lord does, being "born of water" and the "washing of regeneration" as requisite to the COMPLETED act of regeneration before the church. The address to the persons to be baptized corresponds to this view.

¶ *Then the Priest shall speak to the* persons *to be baptized on this wise:*

Well-beloved, who are come here desiring to receive holy baptism, *ye* have heard how the congregation hath prayed, that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive you and bless you, to release you of your sins, to give you the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life. *Ye* have heard also, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in his holy word to grant all those things that we have prayed for; which promise he, for his part, will most surely keep and perform.

Wherefore, after this promise made by Christ, *ye* must also faithfully, for your part, promise in the presence of these your witnesses, and this whole congregation, that *ye* will renounce the devil and all his works, and constantly believe God's holy word, and obediently keep his commandments.

The same questions are then put to the baptized as were put to the sponsors in infant baptism; the same prayers are poured out previously, and the same forms of baptism, reception, and subsequent devotions are gone through.

The exhortations, to the witnesses, are to lead them to put the baptized in mind of their vow; and, to the baptized, to walk answerably to their Christian calling.

(2.) MINISTRATION OF PRIVATE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN IN HOUSES.

There is a public certificate or statement respecting children that have been baptized in the ministration of private baptism, that shews further the views of our church on baptism.

The church discourages such private baptism without great cause and necessity. It requires also that such privately-baptized child should be brought into the church, that the congregation may be certified of the true form of baptism; where the minister himself baptized, in these words—

I certify you, that according to the due and prescribed Order of the Church, *at such a time*, and *at such a place*, before divers witnesses, I baptized this Child.

Where any other lawful minister than the minister of the parish where the child was born or christened, has baptized the child, the following questions are to be asked,

By whom was this Child baptized?
Who was present when this Child was baptized?
Because some things essential to this Sacrament may happen to be omitted through fear or haste, in such cases of extremity; therefore I demand further of you,
With what matter was this Child baptized?
With what words was this Child baptized?

If the minister see that all things were done as they ought to be, he is to receive the child as one of the flock of true Christian people, saying,

I certify you, that in this case all is well done, and according unto due order, concerning the baptizing of this Child; who being born in original sin, and in the wrath of God, is now, by the laver of Regeneration in Baptism, received into the number of the children of God, and heirs of everlasting life; for our Lord Jesus Christ doth not deny his grace and mercy unto such Infants, but most lovingly doth call them unto him, as the holy Gospel doth witness to our comfort on this wise; Mark x. 13—16.

All these minute directions not only shew the value which these reformers attached to baptism, but their care that the baptized should be recognized in the church as truly admitted into that sacred body, and that the whole congregation should sympathize with each other, and feel that they are a holy society and have fellowship together, as being in one fold and of one kingdom.

The part which the congregation should take in baptism is far more important than is generally supposed. The Remarks of Archbishop Usher on the uses of public baptism to the church are so instructive that I here add them.

"Baptism is a visible admittance of thy child, if thou beest a parent, into the congregation of Christ's flock, signifying its interest in the heavenly Jerusalem which is above. Is this a business to be mumbled over in a corner? Christ came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized. Is the receiving of thy child into the bosom of the church in a full congregation no comfort to thee? is it not mercy to see the blood of Christ ministerially sealed up unto thy infant, to purge it from that pollution which it has brought into the world with it; which also thou makest confession of by presenting it to this mystical washing? Is it not joy to thy heart, to hear the whole congregation of God's saints pray for thy child; and that God has honoured thee so much as to count thy very child holy and within his covenant? Think on these things. Every one that is present at baptism should consider that that being a public action of the congregation, every particular person ought reverently to join in it. Shall the whole Trinity be present at baptism, (Matt. iii.) and we be gone? Join ought every one in prayer to God for the infant; join in praises to God for his mercy that we and our children are brought forth, and brought up within the pale of his church, (whereas the rest of the world are like a wilderness) and thank God for adding at the present a member to his church. Join every one ought in meditation of the pollution of nature, of the blessed means of redemption by Christ, of the happy benefits that God seals up unto us in our baptism, even before we knew

them; of the vows and promises which we in our childhood made by those who were undertakers for us; and finding our failings every time we are present at baptism, we should renew our covenant with God, and labour to get new strength to close with his promises, which in our baptism be made unto us. Thus, if we were wise to make a right use of it, we might learn as much at a baptism as at a sermon.

"Parents should always bear in mind the promises which their children have made to God by them, and they for their children; labouring to bring them up accordingly in the instruction and information of the Lord,—teaching them (so soon as they understand) the meaning of that sacrament, unfolding to them God's precious promises, and their strict engagements. The negligence of parents herein is a cause of monstrous profaneness in many; they bring children to receive Christ's badge, but bring them up to the service of the devil; and God hath not so much dishonour by heathens and pagans, as by those who have taken upon them the name of Christians.

"Lastly, baptism should be of continual use through a Christian's whole life; it is administered but once, but it is always lasting in the virtue and efficacy of it. Baptism loseth not its strength by time. In all thy fears and doubts look back to thy baptism, and the promises of God sealed up unto thee there, lay hold on them by faith, and thou shalt have the actual comfort of thy baptism, and feel the effect of it though thou never saw it. In thy failings, slips, and revolts, to recover thyself have recourse to thy baptism; new baptism thou shalt not need; the covenant and seal of God stands firm, he changeth not; only renew thy repentance—renew thy faith in those blessed promises of grace which were sealed up unto thee in thy baptism."

The grand impediment to the full blessings of Christian baptism is the exceeding formality, worldliness, negligence, and levity with which the whole service has been viewed; either as a matter of mere registration of a name, or an external admission into the church, or at the best as a sea-

son of more solemn prayer and devotion of the child to God, without that full scriptural view which our Catechism and Church Service so distinctly give, of its connection with the spiritual life and blessedness of the child, as to furnish us with lively hopes, earnest pleadings with God, and powerful motives to holiness in the subsequent life of the baptized. Were infant baptism more believingly and devoutly received and improved, the benefits of it would be such as to prove more manifestly its divine origin, and the full wisdom and loving-kindness of this gracious ordinance.

CHAPTER XII.

MEDITATIONS AND DEVOTIONS AFTER BAPTISM.

We will pursue here the course taken before baptism, in endeavouring to lead the reader to those practical and devotional thoughts which may tend to his edification.

MEDITATIONS FOR PARENTS.

Gen. xviii. 19.—*I know Abraham that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do judgment and justice ; that the Lord may bring on Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

We may see here how observant the Lord is of the conduct of parents towards their children ! He marks all that they do, and discerns whether their aim be to gratify themselves and the present desires and pleasures of their children. He sees also whether renouncing their own wisdom, and will, and ease, and having entire confidence in God's wisdom and love, they have determined that the way of the Lord is the only way of true happiness, both for themselves and their children, and will use all the authority which he has entrusted to them for his wise, and loving, and most gracious ends.

How happy was Abraham who did this ! What a blessing thus was Abraham to his family ! How remote and how diffusive the blessings which, through ages of ages and generations of generations, have thus come upon men.

Look at the descendants of Abraham ; patriarchs, lawgivers, judges, prophets, priests, kings, apostles, evangelists, and our Lord himself ! and see what great things the Lord brought on Abraham, and all this was connected with his training up his children in the way that they should go.

O Lord, my God, help me as a true follower of Abraham, and one of those whom in Christ thou accountest to be his seed, to tread in his steps, and denying myself all those mere self-indulgent and vain present gratifications, which a carnal nature prompts me to follow, may I seek the true and everlasting welfare of my child, by training it up in thy way, and not in my way, and in all the paths of righteousness which thou hast marked out in thy holy word.

Deut vi. 6.—*The words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

Very gracious and very plain is this direction. First, that God's precious word should be in my own heart, and then, that, from the full enjoyment of it in my own soul, I should make my dear children partakers with me of its riches, sweetness, fulness, and blessedness. And how just and right is this command of my heavenly Father ! I am his creature ; right it is then that I should seek to know and do his will, He must love me, for all my blessings come from him. He must love me in my worst trials, for he gave his Son to die for me. I am therefore certain his word is the word of infinite power, wisdom, and love, marking to me the best path for me to walk in. How full of loving-kindness, too, is the largeness and comprehensiveness, the clearness and sureness of the scripture, and the solemn command that I should thus have it in my heart, and thus bring it before my children ! O my God ! give me wisdom and grace for obedience to this plain command. Daily let me read thy word in private. Constantly

let me meditate upon it ; continually let me connect and compare thy truths with all that passes around me ; and so out of the fulness of my own heart, I shall be constrained to be ever speaking of the testimonies of thy truth to those dear children thou hast given me. How unspeakably important to me and to them that they should be thoroughly imbued in every principle, and motive, and affection with divine truth, the only true light for their feet, the only sure lamp for their path. Let me lead them to these living fountains of salvation. Let me lodge in their memories these saving truths. While the word of Christ dwells in me richly, may I seek also the same blessing for them. This is the divinely-appointed method for its being well with me and mine, and our having both earthly and heavenly blessings.

Matt. xxviii. 20.—*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you ; and lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world.*

This is the direction that immediately follows the command to baptize all nations, and it not only teaches ministers, but also parents, how to improve aright the ordinance of baptism. I must take that but as a step and help to farther instruction in the commandments and doctrines of the Lord. Baptism operates not as a charm ; but as a help to faith, a divinely-appointed means of grace, and an encouragement to duty. As such may I ever view it.

And as it is my duty always with all diligence to be teaching the word of Christ to my children, so especially let some part of the Sunday be invariably appropriated to this sacred employment ; hearing them read the scriptures, seeing that they are well acquainted with the church and other catechisms, and get off by heart psalms or hymns and collects that may be a constant comfort and instruction to them in their subsequent days.

And how cheering is the promise of my Saviour's presence in all these efforts ! I work not alone. If I only

worked alone, what hope could I have? My children have inherited from me a fallen nature, ever tending to sin and evil, and had I not the sure promise of my Redeemer's presence and help, I could not expect to see their hearts renewed, and themselves made meet for the heavenly inheritance. O, gracious Saviour, manifest thy presence by imparting those rich blessings which thou hast in store for all that put their trust in thee.

MEDITATIONS FOR SPONSORS.

Gen. xliv. 32.—*Thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame unto my father for ever.*

I may see in the noble conduct of Judah offering himself a bondman for his younger brother Benjamin, and that when he had done this, all the troubles of his brethren were ended, how much the Lord approves of our undertaking, at personal cost and sacrifice, to become surety for those with whom we are connected. And if Judah was willing to be a bondman for Benjamin, may I be willing to take some little pains, by enlarging my prayers and speaking a word to the King of kings for my godchild. May I have grace to think of this child especially, and, as I have opportunity, to remind this child of the great promises which God, our God, has given to it through his minister in baptism, and of the sacred duties which I in its name, promised to perform, and which as its own mind opens, become equally its happiness and its obligation to perform. O my God, strengthen me to do my part, and assist this child from the beginning with the Holy Spirit, that it may repent, believe, and obey, according to thy holy will.

Psalm cxix. 122.—*Be surety for thy servant for good.*

O thou divine Jesus, who wast made the surety of a better covenant, I praise and bless thy holy name, who at

so fearful a cost didst stand in my place as a sinner, bearing my sins in thine own body on the tree, and didst pay the full ransom price for all my transgressions, and thus hast given me innumerable blessings.

And if thou hast done so much for me, well may I be willing to follow thy steps in even bearing trouble and suffering for the good of others. Give, me, then, grace to fulfil that charge which I have undertaken, in making promises for this child—a charge full of interest and full of love. O do thou make me faithful to my office, in prayer, in watchfulness, in advice and admonition ; even till, through thy abounding mercy, I see the frnit of thy grace manifest in the life and conversation of this child, for whom I have pledged myself in thy presence.

And, O heavenly Father, preserve me from the gross inconsistency of a worldly, covetous, pleasure-loving or ambitious course of life myself ; lest after having undertaken a suretyship, for the good of others, I make shipwreck of my own faith, and theirs also. Let me be willing to part with every thing rather than neglect thy great salvation ; let me above all things follow that knowledge of Christ which is the one thing needful both for myself and for others.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE CHILD IN ADVANCING YEARS.

1 Sam. ii. 11.—*The child did minister unto the Lord, before Eli, the priest.*

1 Sam. ii. 18.—*But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child.*

1 Sam. ii. 21.—*And the child Samuel grew before the Lord.*

1 Sam. iii. 1,—*And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli.*

As if to compel my attention, the Divine Spirit has thus led the sacred writer to repeat four times the blessed fact of Samuel's childhood being consecrated to the Lord, and hereby to point out to me the vast importance of early piety. The Lord has made me too the child of parents

who, in my earliest infancy, devoted me to the Lord, as Samuel's parents devoted him even from his birth. Blessed be God, the Father of mercies, for this proof of his love and their love. O that I, like Samuel, may grow before the Lord, and may offer my earliest years to his service. This is the happiest service, for he is the Blessed One ; this is the highest service, for he is the King of all kings ; this is the most holy service, for he is the holiest of all ; from whom all other holiness, greatness, and happiness comes, as from a fountain-head. I am very ignorant, Lord, teach me : I am young ; Lord, watch over me : I am very weak ; Lord, strengthen me : I am easily misled ; Lord, be thou my Guide. Put good thoughts into my mind, and enable me to bring them to good effect. Let me take good heed to what my parents and teachers, and my ministers say, so that I may daily grow in knowledge. And, above all, may I take heed to thy word, which can alone make me wise unto salvation.

Luke ii. 40.—*And the child Jesus grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.*

Luke ii. 51, 52.—*And he went down with them* (Joseph and his mother) *and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them : but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

Be this my model to copy day by day. O that I may grow strong in that Spirit of God which, without measure, was given to Jesus ; O that I too may partake of that wisdom with which he was filled, and enjoy that grace of God which was so largely upon him. O that I may honour my parents as he did, and be wholly subject to them as he was, and may my dear parents keep the sayings of Jesus in their hearts.

What can be more delightful for me in my youth than the sweet assurance that Jesus was once young and knows

all the stages and steps of growth from infancy. He was once of my age, of my stature, of my weakness, and chose to grow up and learn obedience by the things which he suffered even as I do. What a precious Saviour is this for me! the Lord of all heaven and earth was once a youth like myself, and knows all my sorrows, and is touched with the feeling of all my infirmities.

How important again, that in these words I have nearly the sum of all that is known of the early life of this Saviour! He passed through nearly thirty years in our world, that I might, by his example, learn the great lesson of employing my early years to increase in wisdom as well as in stature, to wax strong in spirit, and by a consistent fulfilment of duties to those over me, to tread in his steps, and grow in favour with God and man.

Exod. xx. 28.—*I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage*

"Thou wouldest that I should know and believe that by thy dearly-beloved Son thou hast brought me from the tyranny and captivity of Satan and this sinful world, (whereof the captivity of Egypt under Pharaoh was a figure) and in his blood shed upon the cross, thou hast made a covenant with me which thou wilt never forget, that thou art, and will be my Lord aud my God; that is, that thou wilt forgive me my sins aud be wholly mine, with all thy power, wisdom, righteousness, truth, glory, and mercy. Wherefore, I might confirm my faith by the innumerable mercies hitherto poured upon me most abundantly, as thy children of Israel might have done and did confirm their faith, by the manifold benefits poured upon them in the desert. Yet especially the seal of thy covenant, I mean thy holy sacrament of baptism, wherein thy holy name was not in vain called upon me (O dear Father, sweet Son and Saviour Jesus Christ, and most gracious good Holy Spirit) should most assuredly confirm, and even on all sides seal up my faith of this covenant, that thou art

my Lord and my God. Even as Abraham and thy people of Israel did by the sacrament of circumcision, which, as the apostle calls the seal or signal of righteousness, so dost thou call it, being but the sign of thy covenant in deed, yet thy very covenant because as thy word is most true and cannot lie, as thy covenant is a covenant of peace infallible and everlasting ; even so the sacrament and seal of the same is a most true testimonial and witness thercof.

" Oh ! what am I, that thou wouldest have me to put my trust in thee ! This thou doest that I might never be confounded, but might be most happy. O what am I that thon wouldest have me to obey thee, not only that I never perish with the disobedient, but that thou mightest give me thy Holy Spirit and rewards innumerable ! O what am I that thou wouldest I should love thee ? the which thing thon doest to this end that I might fully and wholly enjoy and possess thee, according to the nature of love : and therefore dost thou requirc that I might dwell in thee and thou in me."—BRADFORD.

John xiii. 8.—*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*

Even the reverence, zeal, devotion, and apparent humility of Peter refusing to be washed by the Lord, would not avail, if he refused obedience to the divinely-appointed method of his being cleansed ; but when his feet were washed by Jesus, he was " clean every whit." O Lord, give unto me that cleansing which is peculiarly thine own work, and without which I cannot have part with thee. I desire above all things to be united to thee now and for evermore. Cleanse me then in thy most precious blood from all the stains and defilements of my sins, and cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that I may perfectly love God and worthily magnify his holy name. May I have part with thee herc in thy sufferings, sorrows, and temptations ; in thy holy character and heavenly graces ; in thy victories over sin, Satan, and the world ; and so have part with thee in thy everlasting

kingdom and glory. May a part and share with thee in these things be infinitely more desirable to me than all the glories and riches and enjoyments of this vain world. And that I may have this part, enable me to look to thee for cleansing in all the means of thine own appointment, and especially in the enlarged gifts of thine own blessed Spirit.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS AFTER THE BAPTISM OF THEIR CHILD.

O thou Giver of all good, who hast graciously declared that the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee, and who hast promised that thou wilt pour thy blessing upon our offspring, we come unto thee in the name of Jesus Christ, beseeching thee to fulfil these gracious promises to our child, whom we have now dedicated to thee by baptism, to be entirely thine. Thou hast taught us, O Lord, that our child is thus holy in thy sight. 1 Cor. vii. 14. Lord, strengthen and increase our faith more and more; and fulfil thou in our child every thing comprehended in that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. And as Jesus was from his infancy holy (Luke i. 35.) may our child, baptized in his name, from infancy be regarded by us as devoted to the Lord, and be regarded by thee, our God, as thine own child. May we have grace from thee ever to bring up this child [and all the children which thou hast graciously given to thy servants] in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: thou thyself working in us, and working in our child, to will and to do of thy good pleasure. Hear us for the sake of him who for us sinners and our salvation grew up as a child and increased in wisdom and stature, that in all things, sin only excepted, he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

PRAYER FOR SPONSORS FOR GRACE TO FULFIL THEIR OFFICE.

O our God, the fountain of all grace, goodness, and

loving-kindness, who in thy compassionate care hast ordained baptism for admission into thy church on earth, and hast also shewn thy grace to the children of thy people by promising thy Spirit to them, and telling us that of such is the kingdom of God, I entreat of thee growing faith in thy promises, and joyful obedience in all thy word. O largely give thine own Spirit to that child in whose place I have stood, making solemn engagements for it in thy presence. Knowing the rich blessings connected with thy covenant, give, I entreat thee, from its earliest years, to this child such a heart as may lead to faithful performance of these engagements, and secure its full participation of all thy blessings. Give me grace more and more to feel myself the truth and blessedness of every promise and engagement. Oh may this dear child ever have a share in my prayers, and thoughts, and labours, till by thy mighty grace there be wrought in its heart also true repentance for sin, true faith in thy word, and true love to thee our Heavenly Father, through Jesus our Redeemer.

PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED.

Gracious art thou, O Lord, and full of compassion to me. Born in sin, and a child of wrath, I might have perished in mine iniquities, but thy goodness regarded me with pity, and thou gavest me admission into thy church by baptism, that I might become thy child, and the heir of thy glory. All praise and thanksgiving be unto thee. O Lord, truly I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

O Lord, keep this ever in the purpose of my heart to live to thee. Strengthen me with all might by thy Spirit in the inner man. May I continually exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man. May I meditate on thy word continually. O let the word of

Christ dwell in me and mine richly in all wisdom, furnishing our souls with holy and devout feelings, so that we may teach and admonish one another in Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord. Let us be thine in life, thine in death, acknowledged thine in judgment, and dwell in thy glory through eternity. Hear us for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE CHRISTIAN NAME GIVEN IN BAPTISM.

It has pleased God to record in his word "that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch;" and this like every other part of that word, contains important instruction for our use.

The place where the name was given was one of the principal cities of the heathen world, and one that was noted for its wickedness. It was a city named after Antiochus Epiphanes, who has been considered to be a type of Antichrist. At this place of abounding wickedness, it pleased God that the disciples of Jesus should first, probably from their open confession of Christ, be called Christians, and raise thus a standard for his truth among the Gentiles.

Many are the names given to the followers of Christ, such as believers, saints, brethren; but that of Christian (Acts xxvi. 28. 1 Peter iv. 16), most identifies them and proclaims their oneness with Christ. Tertullian, in his Apology, says, "We take our name Christian because we own no other Founder or Master in our Religion but Jesus Christ." Nero, in an edict, made it death for any one to confess himself to be a Christian, and the very confession "Christianus" or "Christiana sum," seems to have sustained the spirit of many a martyr in pagan persecutions.

We profess to prize the name; and yet how many who do this, hate and oppose the reality—that is, the being like Christ! It is, however, the glory of a Christian to bear

this title not in name only, but in spirit and conversation, in his whole life and conduct. May we so walk in his ways, that the promise may be fulfilled to us, " All the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord." Deut. xxviii. 10. And may this name of Christian be dearer to us than all other names, and unite us with the whole family of Christ, however otherwise named in all the earth.

In Christian lands every one bears at least two names, the surname derived from his natural parents, and the Christian name given at his baptism. This, as every thing else occurring in God's providence, may furnish us with spiritual instruction and edification.

Our SURNAME may teach us our fallen nature, as derived from our first father Adam. " That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It may also, as children of believing parents, teach us the rich covenant of grace which has provided this promise for the offspring of believers, " Then are your children holy. I will establish my covenant between me and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Thus out of nature, in its fall and ruin, God takes occasion to manifest the riches of his grace, abounding over all our sinfulness.

Our CHRISTIAN NAME is a delightful pledge of all the blessings of grace, to be carried about with us wherever we go, and to be recalled to our minds whenever we are named. It has pleased God often to change the names of his servants on great occasions. Thus Abram, a high father, was called Abraham, the father of a great multitude. Thus Sarai, my princess, was called Sarah, the princess of a multitude : Jacob, the supplanter, was called Israel, a prince with God : and all this by divine direction.

It is also to be observed, that God has promised, that when his purposes of love are accomplished for Israel : " Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name," and that name seems to be two-

fold, *Hephzibah*, my delight is in her, and *Beulah*, married. Thus names are in the scriptures full of the significance of realities. The proper names in the scriptures have each a meaning, and to know that meaning is often a real help to the just understanding of the word of God.

It is again predicted as one of the blessed effects of the pouring-out of the Spirit in the last days, compared to pouring water on the thirsty, and floods on the dry ground, —"One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." God has himself, on various occasions, pointed out the name by which he would have his servants called, Luke i. 13; Gen. xvii. 19. The name also of his own Son was predetermined by him. Matt. i. 21; Isa. vii. 14.

Well, then, has the church, from very early ages, joined with baptism the giving a name to the baptized, and particularly to infants at the time of their baptism. This appears to have been the practice of the Jews at circumcision. Isa. viii. 3. Luke i. 59; ii. 21.

There is a general and a particular use of this name. The *general use* is to shew distinctly the new nature and character of the regenerate soul; that the child is not to be sensual, but spiritual; not earthly, but heavenly; not a child of wrath, but a child of love; not a child of the flesh, but of the spirit; not to be of the world that now is and perishes, but of the world to come, which is everlasting. O that all Christians did but ever bear in mind what their Christian name calls them to, what high privileges and what holy duties are connected with that name!

This should make us Christians more careful in the names which we give to our children than we commonly are. In this, indeed, as in everything excellent, there may be an excess of superstition, and much manifestation of folly. The infidel historian, Hume, takes occasion, from very foolish names, asserted to have been given in the time of the Commonwealth, to throw great contempt and ridicule

on the Puritans of those days, and that mockery by an infidel almost reconciles a Christian even to this abuse of what was good; for the trial of cruel mockings is the mark of those of whom the world is not worthy, and is infinitely better than a praise of this world, which is abomination before God. Yet a wise, and most Christian and profitable use may be made of that naming of a child, which in the general practice of Christians is now most unmeaning and insignificant.*

There are some excellent remarks of Bishop Jewell on this subject. He says, "Some are herein overseen. They refuse to call their children by the names of holy men and women, because they think it to savour somewhat too much of religion, and therefore either they name them at adventure, having no regard at all how they be named, or else they give them the names of heathen men, and call them Julius Cæsar, Hercules, Lucretia, Scipio, and such like. These, though they were notable in wisdom, learning, chastity, boldness, and in conquests, yet were they heathen men, and knew not God. The name is nothing. It commendeth us not to God: yet may a Christian father be ashamed to call his child by the name of such, who were enemies to the cross of Christ.

"Chrysostom, a godly father, saith, 'In this thing, that is in the naming of their children, both the godliness of the parents, and also their great care for their children, is declared. And how have they forthwith, and from the beginning, taught the children which were born unto them, giving them warning, by the names wherewith they call them, that they should practise virtue. They did not give

* Dr. Adam Clarke notices, on Philemon i. 2, that there is a peculiarity in the use of proper names in this epistle, which is not found in any other part of St. Paul's writings.

Philemon, our dearly beloved, affectionate, from φιλημα, a kiss.

Apphia, our beloved, from the diminutive of a brother or sister, used to express kindness

Archippus, our fellow-soldier, meaning the ruler or master of a horse used in war.

Onesimus, ver. 10, 11, profitable, from ονημι, to help.

The apostle takes occasion, from the meaning of the names, to suggest practical and useful thoughts.

names at adventure, and without reason, as is used now a days, for now men say, Let the child be called after the name of his grandfather or great-grandfather. But our old fathers did not so. They took all heed to call their children by such names which should not only provoke them to virtue, which carried the names, but should teach all others much wisdom, whosoever should remain many years after them."

Again he saith, "See how great understanding they of old time had, that even the women named not their children rashly or by chance, but called them by names that foreshewed such things as might happen after." And of Leah, Jacob's wife, he makes a special commendation: "See how she names not her children simply, nor at adventure she called him Simeon, because (says she) the Lord hath heard." Therefore Chrysostom says, "Let us not therefore give names unto our children that are common names, or because they were the names of our grandfathers or great-grandfathers, or of such who have been famous for their parentage, but rather let us call them by the names of such as have excelled in virtue, and have been most faithful towards God."

"Let them carry the names of the apostles, of the prophets, of the martyrs, of such who have been constant in the faith and have suffered death for Christ's sake: that so they may be taught by their name to remember whose name they bear, and that they neither speak, nor do anything unworthy of their name. As if any be called JOHN, that he pray for grace, and desire to be filled with grace; that he give witness of Christ that he is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the Lord;" that he rebuke vice boldly, as John did in Herod, though he were a mighty prince. Or if he be called PAUL, that he so become a follower of Paul as Paul was of Christ, and say with Paul, "that I might live unto God I am crucified with Christ. Thus I live, yet not I now, but Christ liveth in me;" and hear Christ speaking unto him as did Paul, and fall down and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" So let

him that is called THOMAS touch the bosom of Christ, and handle his wounds, and make a good confession, as Thomas did, and say, "My Lord and my God." Let MATTHEW forsake his customs, even the deceitful gains of the world, and follow Christ. Let DANIEL remember Daniel,—though he should be thrown into the den of lions, or be burnt in the fire, or suffer any cruel torments, yet let him not therefore forsake God, but put his whole trust in him. Thus should our names teach us, that whether we write them or utter them, or hear them spoken, they may put us in mind of Christian duty and godliness."

It may help to assist some of my readers, both to profit by their own names, and also facilitate their choice of a name for a child, to give a list of the most common names, and their meaning.

SCRIPTURE NAMES, WITH THEIR MEANING.

Names of Men.

ABEL, mourning.
ABRAHAM, father of a multitude.
ADAM, earthy.
ALEXANDER, assisting men.
ANDREW, a strong man.
ASSHER, happiness.
AUGUSTUS, majestic.
BARNABAS, son of consolation.
BENJAMIN, the son of the right hand.
CALEB, as the heart.
CLEMENT, mild.
CORNELIUS, horn of the sun.
DAN, he that judges.
DANIEL, judgment of God.
DAVID, beloved.
ELIAS or ELIJAH, God the Lord.
ELISHA, the salvation of God.
ENOCH, dedicated.
EZEKIEL, God is my strength.
EZRA, a helper.
FELIX, happy.
GABRIEL, God is my strength.
HEZEKIAH, strong in the Lord.
JABEZ, sorrow.
JACOB, supplanter.
JAMES, the same.
JEDIDIAH, beloved of the Lord.
JEREMIAH, grandeur of the Lord.
JOB, he that weeps.
JOHN, grace of the Lord.
JONATHAN, given of God.
JOSEPH, increase.
JOSHUA, the Lord the Saviour.
JOSIAH, the fire of the Lord.
ISAAC, laughter.
JUDAH, Jude, the praise of the Lord.
LUKE, luminous.
MARK, shewing.
MATTHEW, a reward.
MATTHIAS, the gift of the Lord.
MICHAEL, who is like to God?
MOSES, taken out of the water.
NATHAN, given.
NATHANIEL, the gift of God.
NEHEMIAH, consolation of the Lord.
NICOLAS, victory of the people.

NOAH, rest.
OBADIAH, servant of the Lord.
ONESIMUS, profitable.
PAUL, little, or rest.
PETER, a rock or stone.
PHILEMON, affectionate.
PHILIP, warlike, or lover of horses.
REUBEN, vision of the Son.
SAMSON, his sun.
SAMUEL, asked of God.
SHEM, name or renown.
SIMEON, hears or obeys.
SOLOMON, peaceable.
STEPHEN, a crown.
THEOPHILUS, a lover of God.
THOMAS, double.
TIMOTHY, honour of God.
TITUS, honourable.
ZECHARIAH, memory of the Lord.

Names of Women.

ABIGAIL, the joy of the Father.
ANNA, gracious.
CHLOE, green herb.
ELIZABETH, the oath of God.
DEBORAH, a word.
ESTHER, secret or hidden.
EVE, living.
HAGAR, a stranger.
HANNAH, gracious.
JEMIMA, handsome as the day.
JOANNA, the grace of God.
LEAH, grieved or weary.
LYDIA, birth.
MARTHA, bitter.
MARY, lifted up or exalted.
MIRIAM, the same.
MYRA, flowing.
PHEBE, pure.
PRISCILLA, ancient.
RACHEL, a sheep.
REBECCA, fat or full.
RHODA, a rose.
RUTH, filled.
SARAH, princess of the multitude.
SUSANNA, a lily, or joy.
TABITHA, clear-sighted.

COMMON NAMES, WITH THEIR MEANING.

Names of Men.

ALBERT, all bright.
ALFRED, all peace.
AMBROSE, immortal.
ANTHONY, a flower.
CHARLES, stout.
CHRISTOPHER, a bearer of Christ.
EDGAR, happy honour.
EDMUND, blessed peace.
EDWARD, blessed nature.
EDWIN, a happy conqueror.
EUGENE, well-born.
EUSTACE, steady.
FRANCIS, frank, free.
FREDERIC, rich, peace.
GEORGE, a husbandman.
GILES, goat's skin.
HENRY, honour, or rich at home.
HERBERT, expert soldier.
HUGH, high, or to cleave.
HUMPHREY, makes peace at home.
LANCELOT, a lance or spear.
MILES, millet, or a soldier.
PATRICK, a senator.
RALPH, help in council.
RICHARD, liberal-hearted.
ROGER, desiring rest.
THEOBALD, early, virtuous.
THEODORE, the gift of God.
THEODOSIUS, the same.
VINCENT, a conqueror.
WALTER, master of wood.
WILLIAM, the shield of many.

Names of Women.

ALICE, descended of a noble family.
AMELIA, to make better.
ANN, gracious.
ARABELLA, a fair altar.
BARBARA, foreign.
CAROLINE, singing.
CATHARINE, pure.
CICELY, the herb so called.
DOROTHY, the gift of God.
FLORA, flourishing.
FRANCES, frank, free.
ISABELLA, handsome.
JANE, the grace of God.
LUCY, light, or luminous.
MARGARET, a pearl.
ROSE, the flower so called.
THEODOSIA, the gift of God.
VICTORIA, victory.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DUTY OF PARENTS TO THEIR BAPTIZED CHILDREN.

TAKING his infant to baptism is the expression of the parent's faith that the promises of God to their children are true, and that they gladly and gratefully accept, in full confidence of heart, this love of God, owning it by this means of his appointment. Their baptism is designated to be a great help to Christian parents, in the right education of their children. St. Peter, in exhorting the Jews to repent and be baptized, for the remission of sins and with the promise of the Holy Ghost, says, "For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord shall call." Acts ix. 39. The full instruction which, as we have seen, baptism conveys on all the most important truths of religion, is designed for their edification. The great privileges which it sets forth and assures, is for the manifestation, exercise, and increase of their faith.

But though the Church of England, in its Catechism, and in its address to the sponsors, has done much to make this clear, yet from various circumstances, the power and energy of this ordinance, as a help in education, has been greatly lost. Baptism has been too much cast out of the public congregation, and made a private service ; it has been connected with the mere name and register of a child's birth : it has been a mere family festival ; and so its religious character has been greatly lost sight of ; and yet farther it has been abused as circumcision was, in

being made a substitute for regeneration. Hence, it has but little been used as an ordinance of divine grace, full of blessing.

May the remarks now to be made assist parents and all who have the charge of children, in their responsible office.

The first requisite in a right education is to have a clear view of the main thing to be attended to, in the children whom God has committed to our trust. If "the eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light." The Church of England places this distinctly before us in these emphatic words, THE SOUL'S HEALTH. Our Lord commands us, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Matt. vi. 33. And in a similar view, he tells Martha, "One thing is needful, and Mary (who sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word, while Martha was cumbered about much serving)—Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her." The SOUL'S HEALTH is then the main thing, the one thing needful to be constantly in the eye of the Christian parent.

And rightly to attend to this, THE SOUL'S DISEASE must be discerned and ever borne in mind. One of the earliest truths brought before us in scripture is, that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image" (Gen. v. 3); and that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Gen. viii. 21. All experience confirms this. The great wisdom of a Christian education is to cure this first and great disease of the soul, by that full remedy which God has provided in the glorious gospel of his grace. "They that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." Matt. ix. 12. But we being sick all over, as the nation of Israel was; of whom it is said, "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it;" we being thus diseased with sin, infinitely need the Divine Physician, and his heavenly medicine, for our souls. And if the question be raised, "Is there no balm in Gilead?

Is there no physician there?" The answer in the Bible is clear,—there is both medicine, and a Physician.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is our able and skilful PHYSICIAN, fully competent to heal the worst spiritual diseases of the soul. It is his title, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Exod. xv. 26. It is his gracious promise, "I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxx. 17); and it should be our fervent prayer to him, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise." Jer. xvii. 14. All the healing of bodily diseases which he wrought on earth, was illustrative of the yet more important healing of the soul, which he only can effect. Let us know the only Physician of souls for ourselves and our children, and go to him first of all.

Some remarks, in a work with many valuable thoughts, entitled, 'An Affectionate Address to Christian Parents,' are so full of this precious truth, that though the extract is long, I am persuaded that the Reader will be glad to see them.

"We must begin their education for eternity as early as that for time. Oh, that every little one was taught, before it could speak, to lisp the name of Jesus, as its dearest friend; to learn to receive, as from a Father's hand, the mercies that it can comprehend—its food, its bed, its cheerfulness in play. Its anxiety for stories, gratified by tales of Him who was once an obedient child, and what a cold hard bed he had, and then was nailed to a tree, and suffered more pain than any little child can understand, that they who love him might be happy for ever. Tales of the little children who were glad to see the Lord, and cried Hosannah! though grown-up men rebuked them; and of the Lord who blessed the little children, though grown-up men sent them away. Tales of the house, of the way-side, and of the boat upon the sea, and how he could make all calm, when they were sore afraid; and yet he had not where to lay his head, because the world was wicked, and is wicked still; and how he laid the little ones upon his bosom, where

none ever laid their head beside, except the disciple whom he loved ; and how he loved the child's parents before they loved him, and loves his lambs because the child's parents leave them to him ; that Jesus is grieved when they do wrong, and yet the naughty things they say and do are all forgiven for his sake. This would be like the dew of heaven dropping into their ears, and bringing every affection into contact with Jesus ; taking the core of their little hearts, and wrapping round them that name that gladdens heaven, and yet can seek a home in the bosom of a little child. Teaching them to clasp their little hands, and say, "Father ;" and telling them why they may call God their Father, because he made Jesus the brother of his people. Though he made the world, he became the brother of man. Presenting every duty as a debt of gratitude to Jesus, and every display of their own self-will as a trespass against him who wept over the sins of the city he loved. And then when childhood takes the place of infancy, continuing still to teach obedience, meekness, gentleness, kindness, and restraint of their own selfishness, not as so many abstract duties, mere matters of right and wrong, but in connection with grace, mercy, and peace. Turning their every thought to Jesus as a Saviour who can sympathize with the trials of childhood ; one who affords an ever-varying theme for the table, the fire-side, and the nursery. Your own fondness and care represented as but a feeble imitation of the tenderness of Him who gave you to them, and them to you, and all to Jesus. Thus not letting the love of your little ones stop short in yourselves, but sending it on till it finds rest in the bosom of God. Every prineiple acted on towards them, and which they are taught to act upon towards one another, borrowed from the ways of him who is thus early made the centre of their thoughts and affections. When chastisement is inflicted, let reference be made to the dealings of the Father with our own souls, that chastising is good for us all betimes. When aught is forgiven, let that forgiveness be aecompanied with especial reference to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Watch-

fulness as to whom they associate with, whether servants, relatives or play-fellows ; for Satan at least is aware of the power of education, and has many schoolmasters. All diligence that they may see the constant remembrance of the Lord that bought us, not in word only but in deed, in every family arrangement, in the management of all internal and external concerns ; so as to let a whole-hearted reality in the Master's service meet their eye wherever they turn it. Treating them as little pilgrims, already marching through the wilderness along with us ; and then expecting them to act upon Christian principle. "Children, obey in the Lord, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." And above all, care, morning by morning, and evening by evening, to join in prayer to our Father and theirs, that, like young Samuel, they may grow in the favour of the Lord ; He himself their Teacher, and their parents only fellow-helpers together with him. Until childhood shall have passed away, leaving their hearts pre-occupied against the chilling influence of a selfish world ; and then parents and children may rejoice together, a happy believing family, exhibiting a lovely miniature of the household of faith, sharers of the same hope, partakers of the same joy, one in Christ, and that for ever. This is Christian education ; this, and nothing short of this, is nourishing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The REMEDIES which Jesus has provided are of various kinds, outward and inward. His whole system of providential dealings with us is designed, in wisdom, mercy, and love, for our healing. Even his sharpest trials are the skilful efforts of our most wise physician. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." It is he who places us in our various circumstances, knowing our spiritual diseases and designing our good.

But the grand remedy which he has provided is full of wonders of grace and love ; an unheard-of, and by man inconceivable and wholly unimagined means of cure ; even nothing less than the Physician himself taking our sick-

nesses: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." Matt. viii. 17. Let the glorious truth be as distinctly apprehended as it is plainly revealed. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 'All we (notice the word *all*) like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," (and here also notice the corresponding *all*). The blood of Jesus applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit, this is the sovereign remedy for all our diseases. This is that cleansing and "washing from our sins in his own blood," which the ordinance of baptism, as we have seen, unfolds to our view.

The means by which we take this remedy is FAITH. This he requires, this he gives to them that ask. When the afflicted father laid his son's desperate disease before the Saviour, (in doing which he was a true guide, and furnished an important lesson for all earthly parents,) he said, "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." On this appeal to him as to his faith, we have a most striking exhibition of the struggling nature of grace, pouring out its difficulties, weakness, and necessities, into the bosom of the Saviour. "And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord! I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" an irresistible application to the compassionate heart of Christ, which at once gained the desired blessing.

Baptism and its benefits and privileges are designed as the great help of our faith, setting before us this remedy, and leading us to apply it to our daily necessities.

As soon as God has given to parents this precious "gift that cometh from the Lord," it should be the parents' desire that it should, like Jeremiah, be "sanctified;" (Jer. i. 5.) like John the Baptist, "be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." Luke i. 15. What a trust indeed has God given to us in the charge of an immortal being!

This child will live for ever! What a truth! It will live for ever in hell or in heaven! Oh what a thought! its condition is deeply affected by my present conduct to it! What a responsibility! But it may live, and become like Noah the parent of millions yet to be born: it may, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, become the head of a holy nation; or, like Esau, the head of a wicked nation! Remote generations yet unborn may be affected by its character! One grows giddy and is overwhelmed at the amazing issues dependent on its becoming a Child of God! And at this fearful head and spring of all that is yet to come, oh with what a relief Christian baptism comes in, and speaks of God's love to us and our offspring, and his willingness to admit "such into the kingdom of heaven."

The importance of an EARLY BEGINNING in Christian education is very great. It is brought before us in the history of Hannah and of Eli, and her son and his sons, with a distinctness that cannot be mistaken. Eli's sons "made themselves vile, and he restrained them not;" they were sons of Belial: he seems to have indulged them, and neglected their instruction, till, though his admonition then was serious and earnest, it was too late. Hannah, on the other hand, gave her's to the Lord from the very beginning, and as soon as ever he was weaned, presented him in the temple, and "lent him to the Lord," saying, "as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord;" and this early devotion of her child to God was the beginning of the full blessedness of Samuel in his subsequent life.

To Christian parents we need hardly first insist upon the great need of LIVELY FAITH in all those precious promises, which we have shewn, in the chapter on the warrant of infant baptism, belong to them and their children. Meditate on those promises; consider them well. Be fully persuaded that what God has promised he is able also to perform. He means what he says. Have full confidence in his truth. Dread rather dishonouring him by unbelief, than suppose that faith is presumption where he has expressly promised. Fear to manifest a doubting spirit,

which charges God with falsehood, rather than think it humility to imagine the promises are too great or too good for such as you. Nothing is too great or too good for us to hope from our gracious and most merciful Father, after his not having spared his own Son for us.

Duly to set forth these promises to our children, is a very important part of education, moderating and sweetening all the strictness of discipline, and shewing the love on which it is founded. It is a solemn direction to fathers: "Ye fathers, provoke not your children unto wrath, but bring them up in the nurture (εκτρεφετε αυτα εν παιδεια) and admonition of the Lord." Ephes. vi. 4. The words point out the affectionate cherishing as well as correction of a parent. The parallel command is, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Col. iii. 21. There is danger not only of spoiling a child by over-indulgence, against which we are warned in the Old Testament (Prov. xiii. 24; xix. 18; xxiii. 13; xxix. 15, 17.) but danger also of provoking and discouraging a child by withholding the rich promises and overflowing grace of the gospel, and bringing only law and power and authority, and so of enkindling only unholy and depressing feelings in the minds of children. Whereas, let the grace of the gospel, in the reception of children to all its blessings, be set before a child, and teaching these promises, the parents may well call their children in their strength to holiness of life.

But the promises are the food not only of faith, but of prayer. Use them all as so many pleas for FERVENT PRAYER. Lodge in the treasury of heaven a rich store of prayers for your dear children. The prayers of parents for children seem to have a special power. Thus Abraham prayed for Ishmael, and was heard. Gen. xvii. 18—20. Job prayed for his sons. Job i. 5.

The next important step is THE OBTAINING OF SPONSORS for your children: and here let the grand principle of seeking first the kingdom of God regulate your desires and conduct. There are many temptations to act otherwise,

and the Lord knows what may be right to us in cases where man might judge hardly of our conduct. But as a main principle, to be steadily kept in view, regard the piety of a godfather and godmother rather than their rank or property or influence, or the nearness of their relationship, or their past friendship to you, or any other mere worldly consideration. You must honour God more than man in this as in everything else. One prayer from the heart of a pious godfather or godmother is worth more than all that a worldly godfather or godmother can do for our children.

A farther duty is that of PUBLIC BAPTISM in the congregation where it can be had. Our church requires us to admonish our people on this head: and there is much reason in our day for the admonition being given. Rich persons may like to have the self-indulgent ease of a drawing-room baptism, in the midst of the pomps and vanities of this world; it distinguishes them from the poor; it gives them no trouble; it can be made an occasion of display and form. I deny not that there are cases of illness and weakness, and providential circumstances of other kinds, which justify a private baptism; but oh, let us guard against bringing carnal motives into the ordinances of God. A poor man may find it, on the other hand, inconvenient to get his friends together at particular times or seasons for public baptism. But all such minor motives ought to be merged in the great importance of securing the prayers of a whole congregation, and imparting a fuller blessing to the church of Christ. Let parents strive to have the privilege of a public baptism, and ministers will soon rejoice in the general administration in the congregation of this holy sacrament.

The baptismal services of the church have already been considered. The previous PREPARATION FOR THE BAPTISM of our children materially affects the profit to be derived from it. A pious minister of the gospel in New England, Mr. John Baily, thus recorded in his private journal his feelings previous to the baptism of one of his children:—"I spent some time in offering up myself and

my child to the Lord, and in taking hold of the covenant for myself and for him. It is actually to be done to-morrow in baptism. I prayed hard this day, that I might be able, in much faith and love, and new-covenant obedience, to do it to-morrow. It is not easy, though common, to offer a child unto God in baptism. O that is a sweet word, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed" after thee. No marvel Abraham fell on his face at the hearing of it." *

The sacrament of baptism is indeed a most solemn service, and if men should prepare for the Lord's Supper, which occurs frequently, surely that which occurs but once in the life of a Christian, and affects the whole of his life, calls for much serious preparation.

The SUBSEQUENT IMPROVEMENT of baptism by parents is a point of great moment.

Parents may first ASSIST THE SPONSORS IN FULFILLING THEIR OFFICE. We have got into such a formal course of complimentary sponsorship, that children forget who are their godfathers, and godfathers forget for whom they have stood. This ought not to be. Why should sponsors never think of their office, and never speak earnestly, seriously, and impressively to their children, question them on their religious state, and seek to help them on in their Christian course, both by their advice and their prayers? Let parents seek to stir up those who have undertaken this kind and Christian office, thus really to seek to fulfil it.

But, after all, THE MOST IMPORTANT PART MUST REST ON THE CHRISTIAN PARENT. The subject of Christian education is both far too large and too weighty to be here fully considered. But baptism furnishes instruction in its true nature: to commence from the earliest years, and begin, where God begins, with the riches of his grace to those born in sin, and the children of wrath. Let the principles declared in baptism be the principles of the family, if you would have the blessings of baptism assured

* See the quotation in the valuable work, "Bowden's Religious Education Enforced."

to your children. But if, while they hear at church the devil and all his works renounced, they hear at home only laughter at the name of the devil, as if he were an imaginary being, instead of our bitter, malignant, subtle, and ever-active foe, what resistance can you expect to be made against his devices ? If while they hear at church the pomp and glory of this world and all covetous desires of the same condemned, they see at home those pomps displayed as most attractive, and those desires eagerly expressed and followed, how can the children think of fighting with the world as a real enemy that must be conquered ? If while the carnal desires of the flesh are reprobated in the house of God, the indulgence of the same is the subject of daily conversation and pursuit at home, how can the child really be aware of their deadly nature ? If they are left to the care of ungodly servants, the society of ungodly companions : if God be represented rather as a taskmaster than a father ; if their own self-will be gratified and God's will disregarded, what good can issue ! Let there be a consistency between our profession in this holy ordinance and our daily conduct in our families, by renouncing these things in practice, as well as profession, which at our baptism we have all promised to renounce.

So the faith expressed in baptism, in all the great realities of Christianity, as summed up in God giving his Son to die for our sins, should govern all our plans, leading us "not to live to ourselves, but to him who died for us," if we would have our children possessors of their faith.

And God's holy will and commandments, as summed up in loving God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength, and in loving our neighbour as ourselves, must be really regarded by us : if we would help them to regard it, this love must be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us : we must be taught of God to love one another, and bring these things out into our lives, if we wish our children thus to love. They are creatures of imitation ; they follow us as much as they can in what they see us do.

And especially they are most of all attentive to the conversation that passes in the family, and most of all influenced by the sentiments which they hear from their father's guests, and at their father's table. How important, as it regards them, for us not to know a wicked person, and to be a companion of them that fear God!

The mother of a family which had been much blessed of God, was asked how she came to be so happy in her children. She replied, that she owed it under God to the rule with which she had set out, and which she had been enabled to carry through, that "there should be but one will in her family, and that that will should be the will of God."

What a scene of missionary usefulness, Christians, thus does your own family present. O be not content with supporting liberally many a blessed institution to send the gospel far and wide, at home and abroad, while your own proper field is neglected. Here, while you neglect no other means of doing good that God opens to you, you may do far more extensive good than you can do in any other way You and your children, through the power of the gospel seen in your lives, may be the largest of blessings to your fellow-creatures.

We are told of Philip Henry, in his Life, that "in dealing with his children about their spiritual state, he took hold of them very much by the handle of their infant baptism; and frequently inculcated upon them that they were born in God's house, and were betimes dedicated and given up to him, and therefore were obliged to be his servants." The seed of Philip Henry's piety brought forth fruit that subsists to this day. His descendants yet love and serve the Saviour.

The continual and natural intermixture of religious conversation with our ordinary conversation is both plainly commanded in the scripture, and in experience found to be most practically beneficial. Nothing can be more positive than the directions. "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach

them diligently to thy children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 6, 7. "The fathers to the children shall make known thy truth." Isaiah xxxviii. 19. "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children." Psalm lxxviii. 5—7.

DISCIPLINE AND CORRECTION are other parts of parental duty as it concerns baptized children. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eph. vi. 4. Many are the charges to parents in the book of Proverbs on this point. "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight to thy soul." Prov. xxix. 15—17. O what a blessing is early discipline and restraint, mildly but firmly maintained, in all the subsequent course of our children! The world is full of misery through the neglect of it, and the most blessed instrumeuts of good, now as well as in former days, are those whom their parents have brought up in godly restraint when young.

Once more, AN EXPLANATION OF THE MEANING OF THIS ORDINANCE, as they are capable of understanding it, should be given. Thus the Israelites were directed to do with regard to the Passover—"When your children ask, What mean you by this service? then ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." Exod. xii. 26, 27. And so they were called to do with regard to all God's testimonies. Deut. vi. 20—25. Thus should we also explain to our children this sacred rite, and seek to interest their young hearts in all those privileges and blessings which God has provided for them.

To these views and in this spirit, Christian parents, may we have grace to train up our children. With all this also, warning and admonishing them of the fearful danger,

which we shall afterwards consider, of the baptized drawing back to perdition. 2 Peter ii. 20, 21. Heb. vi. 4—8; x. 26—39.

These are the varied duties which parents have to fulfil to their baptized children; but there is yet a more direct baptismal instruction, and a deeper lesson of divine truth, to which the scriptures and our church specially call our attention. The last part of the address to the sponsors bids them to remember always "that baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him; that as he died and rose again for us, so should we who are baptized, die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

This shews us that suffering was the way our great Master went to his glory, and by that he has already procured for us the full title to all spiritual blessings; so that they are actually ours by faith, and in the strength of this confidence it points to us the way in which we must follow him. It shews us that the gospel confers on us unspeakable blessings; and then that those blessings are realized in the way of self-sacrifice. That the blessing of baptism is not carnal security, in the indulgence of our lusts: but first the free forgiveness of all our sins in Christ, and then the death of those lusts and the life of godliness. Oh let us understand what regeneration really is, and the self-righteous will shrink from claiming it in baptism, and the spiritually-minded will regard baptism as a real help to holiness, humility and love.

The importance of the duties which lie on Christian parents may be seen from the evil consequences of neglecting those duties. Look at Eli, a truly devoted servant of God; yet neglecting duly to restrain and bring up his children for God, how bitter were the fruits to Eli and his house, to the children themselves and to their whole country: and that we might never lose sight of it, observe throughout the contrast in Hannah's child Samuel. 1 Sam.

ii. 25—35. We see in the case of David's children, the evil of indulging and spoiling children; what distress Ammon and Absalom and Adonijah occasioned him. Respecting Adonijah it is said, "His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? 1 Kings i. 6.

And, on the other hand, what blessings follow their pious education—"I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Gen. xviii. 19. The happy result of this was, Abraham's children were blessed and a blessing to all nations, and will be so for ever. David's care in the instruction of Solomon was blessed in his becoming the wisest of kings. Prov. iv. 3, 4. Through the care of his mother Lois, and his grandmother Eunice, Timothy attained that early piety which made him such a blessing to the church. 2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15.

Thus, parents, has God given us the fullest encouragement, patiently and steadily, with daily self-denial, to attend to our very important work of training up our children in the way they should go. May we firmly set about it in the divine strength, constantly attend to it, and receive the full reward!

I cannot close this chapter without directing the Christian reader's attention to the unspeakable BLESSEDNESS OF A CHRISTIAN FAMILY walking in the ways of the Lord. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Psalm cxxxiii. 1. This unity can only be attained by grace imparted to all from one Saviour, like the holy oil first poured on the head of the High Priest, and then descending from him in one combined fragrance and unity of good. It is, however, delightful to see, both through the Old and New Testament, how much God's blessing has descended on households and flowed in families, and blessed those sweet domestic circles which thus become figures, or rather little remembrances of the

whole family in heaven and earth. Noah and his family were saved from the deluge ; Lot and his family delivered from Sodom ; Rahab and hers from Jericho ; Abraham and his seed were blessed. The households were to feast distinctly on the Paschal Lamb. Exod. xii. 3, 4. Joy in God was to be the common blessing of the whole family of an Israelite, "Ye and your household." Deut. xii. 7. "Ye and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates." v. 12, 18. Let any one look at the word *house* and *household,* as used in the New Testament, and see how it is connected with spiritual blessings, and learn how God delights to give his grace to a whole family. How many of the first-fruits were households ! The nobleman among the Jews was one of our Lord's earliest converts, and he believed with all his house. John iv. 53. Cornelius, the first Gentile, with all his house believed and was baptized. Acts x. 2, 48 ; xi. 14. How careful our merciful Father has been to have these things recorded for our encouragement ! Wheu a messenger of Christ enters a house, the first salutation which he has to give is, "Peace be to this house !" Luke x. 5. The salutation of Zaccheus is, "Salvation come to this house." Luke xix. 9. Thus from Christ, in the fulness of his love, blessings overflow to a believer's household.

These things may give us the full assurance of hope as to the salvation of our households. Oh, let us, Christian reader, rise to this delightful hope. Provided only we believe God's promises, and act them out in our conduct, our children's salvation is as sure as our own. The same word of promise is the security of both.

And how great is "the comfort of love, and the fellowship of the Spirit" which the grace of Christ sheds forth in a Christian family ! Beautiful it is to observe the course of that grace in the gradual subjection of all that is evil in each member, and the continual growth of all that is amiable and lovely. We see a daily flow of kind thoughts and words and works, a tender consideration of each

other's desires and wants, a constant check upon natural selfishness, the subduing of unholy tempers, and the bearing of each other's burdens. A full stream of peace and harmony, love and sympathy, joy and gladness, goodly mirth and cheerfulness, mutual help and comfort, refreshes and gladdens each heart every day. May every reader possess in happy experience this truly Christian family blessedness! Oh may he know the constantly recurring joy of the endearments of a domestic circle, where from those wells of salvation which our God has given us, and which are opened afresh each day in family instruction and in family prayer, in Christian conversation and common studies, true joys are continually received, and then diffused in kindly acts of self-denying love to each member of the family ; and then in enlarging blessedness to relatives and friends, neighbours and parishioners, the church in this land and in foreign lands, to Jews and Gentiles, and to the whole earth ; hastening the happy time when Christ and his grace shall fill the world with blessedness. May these living springs of water (John iv. 14.) be continually multiplying in our desert world, till not a spot is left unrefreshed and unfructified !

CHAPTER XV.

THE DUTY OF THE BAPTIZED.

THE duty of the baptized comprehends the whole of the Christian life. It is an enlistment under the banners of the Captain of our salvation ; and ever after, we have to "fight the good fight of faith, that we may lay hold on eternal life." It is an entrance into the church of Christ ; his name is put upon us, and his honour entrusted to us, and ever after we are to seek his glory and dominion. It is our being called to be "the children of God," and we have henceforth always to be followers (μιμηται, imitators) "of God as dear children. To walk worthy of our high calling ; to adorn in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour ; to glorify God in our body and in our spirits which are his." This is our duty, this our privilege, this our glory.

In order to this we need a very distinct perception, a full and realizing view of the blessings of the gospel ; of the good tidings of great joy which it announces ; of the freeness and fulness of its salvation—that the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus from a Father's love is its record and substance ; that all sins are completely pardoned and blotted out in the blood of Jesus ; that there is a sufficiency of grace for all our infirmities, and ample strength for all our weakness. Oh unsearchable riches of divine grace ! "My God shall supply all your need out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He has provided armour, the whole armour of God, to meet every part exposed to

danger, or needing defence, and has given unto us an effectual weapon, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," to vanquish all our foes.

The church of England places in the foreground of all its instruction our great Christian privileges, teaching the child first this lesson, "In my baptism I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom." It follows in this the plain steps marked out by the inspired writer. "For ye are all THE CHILDREN OF GOD by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE." Gal. iii. 26—29. In this strength we are called to all Christian joys and privileges, and to abound in all the fruits of the Spirit, sowing continually to the Spirit, and never being weary in well doing. Privilege and blessing the strength to duty. Our church follows the pathway of scripture. Both require "the answer of a good conscience towards God," as well as "the putting away of the filth of the flesh," by the washing of water. The Church Catechism expressly states that repentance and faith are required in baptism, and infants are bound when they come to age to perform both those things which were promised for them, when infants, by their sureties. The baptism of water secures outward privileges, and the baptism of the Spirit, received by faith, is needful to completed baptism, and gives the reality of all blessings.

The great and all-important truth, however, taught by these things, has been too much lost sight of. It is the precious doctrine of SALVATION BY GRACE; it is the all-important truth that God first begins to shew mercy to us, and "will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." It is that we are to begin with the love of God to us, and in every thing to realize that grace and love.

Think then of the glorious privileges God would by baptism, convey and assure to you.

First you are called A MEMBER OF CHRIST. Christ has a glorious and mystical body, of which all true believers are real members. This is very often mentioned in the word of God. See how St. Paul dwells at large upon it in that passage beginning thus—"For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 12—31. See also Rom. xii. 4—8. The benefits of this are unspeakably great. Christ is "the head of the body—the church," (Col. i. 18.) and God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph. i. 22, 23. We are to "grow up into him in all things," (Eph. iv. 15.) to the mutual "edifying of the whole body in love. (Verse 16.) The Lord himself "nourisheth and cherisheth us, for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Eph. v. 29, 30. What a state of privilege and blessedness this is! "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. viii. 1. While there is one body, there is also "one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The member united to the body is under the guidance of the head, and by innumerable bands and ligaments, bones and muscles, nerves, veins and arteries, receives nourishment, strength, beauty and usefulness. Faith realizes the grace made over to us in baptism. You have then to regard continually this great privilege, (which God shews his willingness to confer on you in baptism) as a mainspring of holiness, and by faith receive all this love of God.

Next you are counted CHILDREN OF GOD. Being united to Christ in the ordinance of his appointment and in the faith of his gift: the baptized are immediately viewed in

the scripture as the children of God—" For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Unbelief only makes this promise void. Rom. iv. 11—16. Heb. iii. 19. But by faith in Jesus we have the privilege of becoming " the sons of God." John i. 12. We are adopted into God's family ; (Rom. viii. 14—16.) we partake of his Spirit ; " because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. iv. 6. Thus with this comes all the feelings of adoption, and all the delight of the soul in a Father's love : " Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God." 1 John iii. 1, 2. And God himself manifests more and more his love to those believing and confiding in that love. " Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." You have to set this blessing then before your eyes, as the high and heavenly hope of your calling, looking forward and hasting to, that blessed hope of the world, " the manifestation of the sons of God " at the return of our great Redeemer. Rom. viii. 19. Titus ii. 13. Really credit God's love, and enter into its enjoyment, and thus receive the Spirit ; so you will find that " the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

And as a consequence of this adoption into God's family, you are INHERITORS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ; as the apostle tells the Galatians, " Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ ; " (Gal. iv. 7.) or as he tells the Romans —" If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Rom. viii. 17. There is a heavenly kingdom now speedily to be manifested and inherited by the people of God. Matt. xxv. 34. To enter into that, is the consummation of bliss and glory. In baptism God meets us in tender love, and says, I wish you to share this glory, I give it to you ; only now receive it by faith, that

you may be made meet for it. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." 1 John v. 11, 12. Do not then disbelieve this record of God's love, for "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." (Verse 10.) This glorious inheritance, then, as freely given to you in Christ and sealed to you in baptism, is another of those rich promises which you have to set before your minds, and cordially to embrace even as they of old, having seen these promises—"They were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims, for they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." Heb. xi. 13, 15.

And in the strength of these promises, in the fulness of these privileges, you are called to the fulfilment of the vows and promises made on your behalf and in your name.

These are threefold: the renunciation of our spiritual enemies, the belief of all Christian truth, and practical obedience to God all our days.

1. THE RENUNCIATION OF OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES. The baptized makes this solemn promise—"I renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that I will not follow nor be led by them." The early fathers of the Christian church shew that this was the practice in their day. *Tertullian* says, speaking of baptism, We renounce the devil, and his pomps, and angels. *Origen* says, The baptized renounces the evil spirit, and all his damnable pomps. Similar expressions occur in other early writers. But indeed the scriptures are decisive—"Resist the devil, crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof; overcome the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

The ground on which we are called to this warfare is, that all these things are destructive to the life of the soul;

they are perfectly opposed to those real privileges and blessings to which God has called you. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth: what concord hath Christ with Belial." Thus, under the promises of our adoption into God's family (2 Cor. vi. 18.) we are called to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii. 1.

But, O how little does the faith of the church now realize either its actual enemies and dangers, or its true sufficiency and strength! With vast multitudes, Satan and evil spirits are mere superstitious terrors; the world and its pomps and vanities are an object of attraction and not aversion; and the indulgence of the lusts of the flesh the fancied happy end of their plans and labours. Of such, the apostle has accurately defined the character, when he speaks of them with weeping, saying that "They are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." Phil. iii. 18, 19.

May we, as Christian believers, seek to raise our minds to a holier and happier state, by bringing before them the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

2. THE BELIEF OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH is the second promise of baptism. All truth is centred in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dying for our sins. When this is confessed, baptism is administered, (Acts ii. 41; viii. 12,) and submission to baptism is an engagement to receive and observe farther instruction from the scriptures in whatsoever things Jesus has commanded. Matt. xxviii. 19. A summary of this is contained in the apostles' creed; or in the still briefer but most comprehensive three chief lessons gathered from it by the Catechism—"First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who made me and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son, who redeemed me and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God." How thankful ought we to be to

God that every article of faith is a lesson of God's love, and designed to be a light to our feet in the way to our heavenly home. Our engagements are all for our advantage; especially this promise of faith, which is in truth saying, "I will walk in light, and not in darkness. I will follow Christ the light of life. The service of Christ is indeed perfect freedom." Let us, then, pray much for the increase of faith, to which we are thus solemnly engaged. And while we know that "God deals to every man the measure of faith," (Rom. xii. 3.) may we earnestly seek of him, for ourselves and our children, to be "strong in faith, giving glory to God."

This faith is its own evidence, by the peace, and joy, and love, and happiness which it produces. If I believe the love of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost to my soul, as revealed in the faithful word of God, I am "filled with joy and peace in believing," my heart is purified, my spirit is reconciled to God, and my soul delights in him. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself."

Let us, then, seek for ourselves this full privilege and blessing, and make use of baptism to strengthen our confidence in God's loving-kindness to us.

3. Practical obedience to God is the third and last thing promised, and to be taught to the children of the baptized. "I will obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life." What a solemn promise! and yet it is an engagement essential to our happiness; for God's holy will and commandments is in one word "our life." Deut. xxxii. 47. Lev. xviii. 5. Prov. iv. 22. God's holy law is nothing less than the infinite wisdom and boundless love of God marking out the path of safety and happiness for those unspeakably dear to him. It is summed up in love, supreme love to God, and hearty and unfeigned love to man. It is our blindness and corruption that makes us consider that law as hard and severe. The gospel does not, cannot set it aside; it would not be really gospel or good news if it did; it establishes it by providing both fresh motives and fresh

strength for obedience. "I will write my laws in their hearts," is the great promise of the new covenant. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," is the heart-cheering encouragement given to the soul hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

Such are the general duties of the baptized. But, in the present state of the church of Christ, in long established Christian countries, children are generally baptised in their infancy. It may be desirable, therefore, to point out more specifically THE DUTY OF CHILDREN from their early years, till they take upon themselves their baptismal vows at confirmation.

And here I would notice but a few things of primary importance :—

1st. READING THE SCRIPTURES. This is a great duty for the young. Timothy was a lovely and blessed character, full of affection, usefulness, sympathy, and devotedness. He was educated in the early knowledge of the scriptures. St. Paul could say to him, "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." David, too, had found the benefit of early acquaintance with the scriptures. He says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way ? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Psalm cxix. 9. The benefits which it gave him over his enemies, and even his teachers and the ancients, are expressly stated by him in the same Psalm, ver. 98—100. This is a part of that learning "to do all things whatsoever I have commanded," which the Saviour connects with baptism. And let me recommend to the young, from seeing the value of it, learniug off by heart a little portion of God's word every day.

2. DAILY PRAYER IN SECRET at least twice each day, (Psalm v. 3 ; lxv. 8 ; cxli. 2.) and why not thrice ? Psalm lv. 17.) This is the real secret of the spiritual strength of all the children of God. Isa. xl. 28, 31. And there are special promises to the young thus serving and calling upon God. "I love them that love me, and they that seek

me early shall find me." Prov. viii. 17. And why should not children have the privilege of going to their Heavenly Father? His ears are open to their cry. He delights to meet children in prayer. It is twice noticed, as if to be specially observed, that Samuel, when a child, ministered to the Lord, (1 Sam. ii. 11 ; iii. 1,) "and the Lord revealed himself to Samuel," (ver. 21.) The promise of not seeking the Lord in vain is addressed to "the seed of Jacob," as if specially belonging to the young. Isaiah xlv. 19. The baptism of a child gives also a special encouragement ; you were baptized in the name of the Father, and this may teach you that he is as a father waiting to be gracious unto you. Isa. xxx. 18. You were baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost : pray, then, in the Holy Ghost, and he will help your infirmities, and make intercession for you.

Honouring parents and teachers is a duty much impressed on the young in the scriptures, (see Exod. xx. 12. Lev. xix. 3. Prov. i. 8, 9. Deut. v. 16. Matt. xv. 4. Ephes. vi. 1—3,) and one that lies at the very root of subsequent usefulness and blessedness ; as the opposite conduct lies at the root of all evil. See in the history of the sons of Noah to what a remote posterity, and to what an amazing extent one act of dishonouring a parent, and one act of reverencing a parent, may reach. Gen. ix. 22—27. Isaac revered his mother. (Gen. xxiv. 67,) Jacob obeyed his father and his mother. Gen. xxviii. 7,) Joseph nourished his father, (Gen. xlvii. 12,) and corresponding blessings followed them. Jonadab, the son of Rechab, obeying his father, brought down perpetual blessings on his posterity. (Jer. xxxv. 19,) and the Lord of Glory gave us the example of dwelling with his mother and reputed father, and being "subject to them." Luke ii. 51. It pleases God by confidence in an earthly parent and love to him, and honouring him, and subjection to him, to prepare the young mind for the transfer in due time of all these feelings and dispositions to the Heavenly Parent, and for the full joy of heart in the infinite wisdom and power, righ-

teousness and truth, riches and love, dominion and glory of Him who is "our own God."

INCREASING KNOWLEDGE AND GRACE. This was the character of our Redeemer. When young he was presented to the Lord. Luke ii. 22. And after this we read—"The child grew and waxed strong in spirit; filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

Then, and at twelve years old, he went up to Jerusalem again; and after this we read—"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke ii. 52. So should our presentation to the Lord at baptism be an era from which, not only growth of body, but growing strong in spirit, and increasing in wisdom and grace, should commence, and be carried forward. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." For this end pay diligent attention to the varied means of instruction which are afforded either in your father's house, or at the school where you are educated, or by public worship and the ministry of the word, or in catechisms and other pious books, which now are so abundant. No young person who wishes to gain religious knowledge and increase of grace, need be destitute in this happy country of ample means to assist him. The Bible is itself an exhaustless treasury of wisdom for the young, when read with patient prayer and thoughtfulness.

Thus the young have their special duties, in the fulfilment of which they are prepared for confirmation, and for the table of the Lord.

Those duties which more particularly belong to THEM OF RIPER YEARS, when baptized, are plainly stated in the address to them at baptism. Being made children of God and of light by faith in Christ Jesus, they are exhorted to walk answerably to their Christian calling, and as becomes the children of light. The church here alludes to the Apostle's directions to the Thessalonians, "Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day; we are not

of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love,* and for an helmet the hope of salvation, for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Thess. v. 5—9.

Christians are here called CHILDREN OF LIGHT. Their eyes have been opened to see the reality of things around them. Light is knowledge, (John iii. 19,) holiness, (Ephes. v. 8, and happiness, (Psalm xcvii. 11.) How penetrating, how pure, how joyful is light! So is the gospel to the soul! And God shews by baptism that he would bring us to the full enjoyment of this light. The eyes of the understanding enlightened, the heart purified from the gloom and filthiness of sin, the soul at liberty to run in the paths of obedience, and the blessed prospect of fulness of light and glory in the heavenly kingdom of glory—these are the privileges of those whom God has "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col. i. 13.

Christians are also entitled CHILDREN OF THE DAY. There seems intended in this expression a growth of light; light admits of various degrees; that of twilight is different from that of full day. When the eyes of the blind man were opened, he first only saw "men as trees walking," but when he was perfectly restored he "saw every man clearly." Mark viii. 25. We owe this fuller light to the glorious gospel (Luke x. 23, 24; Rom. xvi. 25, 26); and there is a growing light of day in the Christian church

* The apostle, in the account of the Christian armour, (Ephes. vi. 14,) calls righteousness our breast-plate; and many have questioned whether he meant the righteousness of imputation or the righteousness of sanctification. They are, in fact, both included; one objectively, and the other subjectively, and both divine gifts. First, seeing ourselves righteous in Christ through faith; and then made inwardly holy, as the consequence, by his Spirit; being filled with love to God and man. Thus the breast-plate of righteousness, and that of faith and love, are in truth but different names for the same thing, and mutually illustrate and explain each other.

(Matt. xi. 11 ; 2 Cor. iii. 18), as well as in each Christian, Prov. iv. 18. Baptism fully understood sheds a glorious light, the light of day, over our paths ; and this light calls us to eminent purity and holiness. Ephes. iv. 17—24 ; v. 8, 9. Rom. xiii. 12. Our day is not yet indeed fully come, but it is at hand (1 John ii. 8. Rom. xiii. 12) ; we are preparing for it, arousing, awaking, arising, and putting on the garments of salvation. Isaiah lii. 1 ; lxi. 10.)

As partakers of such privileges, they are called to a corresponding course of conduct. And the first is WATCHFULNESS, in opposition to sleep. "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch." 1 Thess. v. 6. Our baptism enlists us into the army of Christ, and one great duty of a soldier is watchfulness, that he may discern the enemy, that he may be preserved from his devices, that he may be ready for the command of the Captain of his salvation. A Christian is in an enemy's country (1 Pet. v. 8) : he has within a great tendency to drowsiness and sloth, to indifference and self-indulgence, and therefore he is so often called by his Lord to watchfulness and prayer, and especially in reference to the return of our Lord. The passage in Thessalonians, as very many others, has a direct reference to that great and blessed hope, Matt. xxiv. 42 ; xxv. 13. Mark xiii. 38. Luke xii. 35—40 ; xiv. 36. 1 Peter iv. 7. Be on the watch-tower. Hab. ii. 1—4. "Cast not away your confidence—for yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. x. 35—37.

As partakers of such privileges and hopes, they are also called to be SOBER, not merely as it regards temperance in eating and drinking, though this be a part not to be neglected, but, as Jerome observes, " drunkenness is manifested not only in drinking wine, but in all things in which the mind is drunk and fluctuates, and cannot maintain its calmness, whether in contracts or business of the day, or losses or gains, or love or hatred." See Jerome on Ezekiel xliv. 21. We are called here then to moderation of mind and heart about all earthly things. Sobriety of mind arises from heavenly affections, and having our hopes fixed on

things above. Thus the apostle Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Phil. iv. 4, 5. And the apostle Peter gives a similar lesson: "Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 13. And this is a lesson especially for the young: "Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded." Titus ii. 6. Well may we have a holy superiority to earthly things in the prospect of the coming kingdom and glory of the Redeemer, and in the full assurance that everything here below shall be shaken and removed, and that his kingdom only is that which cannot be moved. Heb. xii. 26—28.

There are three further graces ever considered in the scripture of primary importance, named in this passage, to which our church refers the baptized adult,—"putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.

1. Faith. This grace, to which the scriptures everywhere attach so much weight, is first to be regarded and put on by the newly-baptized. There are various degrees of faith. On the profession of faith, the baptized are admitted into the church by baptism. It is the design of that ordinance to keep the weak in faith. "Him that is weak in faith, receive ye." Rom. xiv. 1. This is the mind of him of whom it is said, "a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." Matt. xii. 20. Child-like and entire confidence in all that God has said is the noblest attainment of the Christian, and the very root of his highest excellences, as we may see at length in the 11th of Hebrews. Faith has its seat in the heart (Rom. x. 10); the understanding is filled with the knowledge of his will (Col. i. 9); and the whole soul concurs in God's grace and love, as revealed in the gospel. Rom. i. 9. Its objects are the entire compass of divine truth, the full revelation of God's will, while it is mainly fixed on Christ and all he

has done, is doing, and will yet do for us. The objects of faith being thus vast, it must increase with increasing knowledge of those objects. May every baptized person then, like the apostles, pray, "Lord, increase our faith," (Luke xvii. 5), and, like Abraham, "be strong in faith, giving glory to God." Rom. iv. 20.

2. HOPE is one of the daughters of faith. We must first believe what God has revealed of good things to come, before we can hope for a share in them. But baptism is specially designed to enliven our hopes. "We are buried with him by baptism into death ; and if we have been planted in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Rom. vi. 4, 5. In this view the apostle Peter calls Christians to liveliest thanksgivings. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Peter i. 3, 4. Think then of the glorious hope set before you at the speedy return of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the resurrection or change of the body, and it being made glorious like his body ; think of meeting the Lord in the air thus glorified, and being accepted by him ; of having a part in his heavenly kingdom ; think of the beatific company there gathered together, and of sharing their joys through eternity. And let this glorious hope be both "a helmet of salvation" and "an anchor of the soul."

3. LOVE is another daughter of faith, and the greatest of the graces, being most like God and most full of blessedness. "Faith worketh by love." Gal. v. 6. It was love that led the faithful adult to baptism ; love to Jesus and love to his people ; and that love may receive their ample increase and confirmation from the manifested and sealed love of Christ and his people. And love admits of largest growth, so that "the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth." 2 Thess. ii. 3. In nothing is a mature Christian more distinctly marked than by the

growth of love. "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." 1 John iv. 12. Let us seek then to breathe love in all our thoughts, words, and works; let it be painful for us to hear any evil of another; let us make from the heart every allowance of that love "which covereth (στεγει) all things, believeth all things, and never faileth" (1 Cor. xiii. 7); that thus we may be the children of our heavenly Father, and be prepared for that kingdom where all is purity and all is love, and that for ever. "Now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." May we earnestly seek these gifts from our heavenly Father. May we follow after them and attain them, and so be "made meet" for the inheritance of the saints in light. The Christian is called to walk in love, that his soul may be moulded to the very image of his Saviour, and he may be fully prepared for the heavenly kingdom and his future offices there, as King and Priest. He must already, therefore tread in the steps of Christ, and learn the blessedness of self-sacrifice and ministering to the necessities and infirmities and sorrows of others, in patient love learning obedience by the things he suffers, and getting his senses exercised to discern good and evil.

And to what a blessed confidence and joyful assurance this holy and heavenly course raises us, is clear in the closing expressions of the apostle; "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 9. There is heavy wrath hanging over an apostate world, a full-charged woe, increasing through its ungodliness; the third, and last, and greatest, and final woe; a woe in its consummation so complete as for ever to end the wickedness of man on earth. The watchful, sober Christian, having faith, hope, and love, "is counted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke xxi. 36. Jesus appears not for his condemnation, but for his justification; not for his destruction, but for his salvation. And the glories of that salvation are so inconceivably great,

that all that the greatest sufferer for Christ can go through, is "not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Come, then, beloved disciples of the Lord, and enter on this course so full of peace and safety, holiness and blessedness, here and for ever, with your whole heart. Let an elder brother assure you, by his own happy experience, that the ways of Christ are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace ; and entreat you now to give your hearts and your whole service resolutely and steadily, patiently, and perseveringly, to the blessed Saviour. He is worthy of all that all his redeemed can render to him. Confess him now, and he will confess you in the day of his appearing; follow him now, and where he is you shall shortly be, and that for ever.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFIRMATION, AND JOINING THE HOLY COMMUNION.

These privileges of the church of Christ belong to the baptized as they arrive at years of discretion. It is not intended to speak largely of them, but to consider them in connection with baptism.

Confirmation is the completing in public acknowledgment before the church that requirement which infants are unable to fulfil. Our church teaches, that as infants cannot, by reason of their tender age, perform the things required of persons to be baptized,—that is repentance and faith,—they promise them both by their sureties, which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

Let us first notice THE AUTHORITY on which this rite is founded.

God has graciously led his church to this most solemn and impressive rite. The way was prepared for it by the mode in which it pleased God to communicate the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, not through the lower order of ministers, the deacon Philip (Acts vi. 5 ; viii. 5), but by the laying on of the hands of the apostles Peter and John (Acts viii. 14—17), and not merely by baptism, but by laying on of hands after baptism. Acts viii. 16, 17 ; xix. 5, 6. The joining of laying on of hands with baptism among the principles of Christianity (Heb. vi. 2), had led Christian writers in all ages to think that the apostle, in speaking of it to the Hebrews, referred to a rite similar to

our confirmation, as a practice in the apostolic age, and one adapted to the commencing stages of the Christian life.

The writers of the early Fathers (Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, &c.) shew how generally and how early confirmation after baptism was practised in the Christian church. It soon, indeed, became mingled with sad corruptions. Infants even were confirmed immediately after baptism, and the great reason and use of the rite were thus nearly lost. The Reformers, through divine mercy, restored this rite to its truly beneficial use, purging away those unscriptural additions which the Romanists still retain. They produced even a reform so far in the church of Rome, that the Romanists have, without renouncing infant confirmation, specifically directed, in the Catechism of the Council of Trent, that children shall not be confirmed before seven years of age ; and they accompany it with a declaration, that it is still more fitting to delay it till the twelfth year, or years of discretion. Melancthon, Beza, Illyricus, Chemnitus, Calvin, and generally the Reformers of the Lutheran church approved of confirmation, as retained by the English church, as Bishop Hall has shewn in quotations from their writings.

It is remarkable that the apostle, in summing up six principles of religion, numbers amongst them the laying on of hands. Repentance from dead works, and faith towards God, were the great principles of the patriarchal religion, baptism and laying on of hands were specially connected with the Mosaic dispensation (Heb. ix. 10. Lev. iii. 2 ; viii. 23 ; iv. 4 ; xv. 29 ; xxix. 33 ; xvi. 21. Numb. viii. 18) ; and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment were specially unfolded by the prophets (Dan. xii. 2, 3. Hosea xiii. 14. Ezek. xxxvii. Isaiah xxvi.), and all were indeed brought to full light by the gospel) 2 Tim. i. 10. Acts xvii. 31, 32.) The apostle views these as elementary principles leading to the full light of Christianity. The doctrine of the baptisms of the Old Testament had, as we have seen, their completion in Christian baptism ; and

are elementary instructions, preparing us for the fuller knowledge the gospel imparts. The laying on of hands, which, under the Old Testament, referred to the personal transfer of the sins of the guilty, by his laying his hands on the appointed victim, under the New Testament, seems justly to apply to that full reception of all the blessings of the atonement which the completed sacrifice of Christ has procured for us, and which his appointed ministers now manifest by the laying-on of their hands on the pardoned and accepted believers ; and God testified to this himself, at the beginning, by communicating the miraculous gifts of his Spirit to them. Acts viii. 14, 17 ; xix. 5, 6.

Augustine, as quoted by Bishop Hall, gives the following remarks on the continuance of the rite, notwithstanding the cessation of the extraordinary gifts. ' It is not now as it was, that, by the testimony of temporal and sensible miracles, the Holy Ghost is by the imposition of hands given ; as formerly it was for the commendation and better setting forth of the then new-moulded faith, and for the enlargement of the new-begun church. For who does now expect that those upon whom hands are imposed for the receiving of the Holy Ghost, should suddenly begin to speak with tongues ? But invisibly and secretly, by the bond of peace, is the love of God conceived to be thus inspired into their hearts.'

It has been said, Why continue the laying-on of hands, which was accompanied with miraculous gifts, for confirmation now, and yet not continue the anointing of the sick with oil, (James v. 14), which we have now discontinued, the gifts having ceased, as no longer suitable or useful ? But it cannot be proved that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were the only or chief gifts connected with the laying on of hands ; the gifts received thus were for spiritual ends, and for eternal use and benefit, and seem to be noticed by the apostle as among the permanent principles of Christianity, never to be laid aside, though by them we go on to perfection.

If there were any reasonable doubt, whether the expres-

sions on which the rite of confirmation usually is grounded (Acts viii. 14—17 ; xix. 5, 6. Heb. vi. 2.), could be considered as designed by the Spirit to sanction this rite, there are yet other reasons which may well weigh with ns to observe it. When our Lord commands his ministers, after discipling and baptizing all nations, to teach them "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," with a promise of his presence to the end of the world, we have a scriptural authority for that farther instruction which it is one great object of confirmation, in following up baptism, to communicate. So when Israel and their little ones stood before God, to enter into covenant with him, and into his oath (Deut. xxix. 10—13), we have a scriptural instance of the young thus entering into solemn covenant with God. The institutions also of those in authority, where not against the word of God, will have decisive weight with all those who would avoid schism. Heb. xiii. 7, 1—7. Rom. xiii. 17. 1 Cor. xiv. 33, 40.

The author is persuaded that he speaks the universal voice of all his brethren in the ministry who have earnestly and patiently sought to improve this rite in the church, that in no part of their ministry have they had more delightful tokens of the divine blessing on their labours for the spiritual good of those committed to their charge, than in confirmation. O how many thousands will for ever thank God for leading them thus to decision of character and entire devotedness to the Lord !

But that the benefits may be obtained, there must be a corresponding DILIGENCE IN PREPARATION for this rite. The minister will have to meet the youth preparing for it, frequently for weeks before, to instruct, to catechise, to examine, to exhort, and to encourage them, and they will have to give much time, serious thought, hearty interest, and fervent prayer. Confirmation is the open and personal, ingenuous and decided confession of the baptismal vow, on the part of the confirmed, as his true privilege, glory, and happiness ; and the open reception of the intelligent Christian, by the highest officers of Christ, into church-

manship, with prayers for a full blessing from Christ the great Head of the church.

There are so many useful tracts on this subject, that it is needless here to add much advice to those about to be confirmed. The baptismal vows have already been sufficiently explained; the great thing to be attained is this, to have through divine grace, your heart right with God, to be really honest in his sight in what you are doing; not to go through a hypocritical outside service, because it is expected from you, or to gratify your friends, but really to mean from the heart all that the sacred service requires. God must give you this uprightness, and he will do it, if you sincerely seek his grace.*

A few words on the duty of the baptized (having come to years of discretion, and having been confirmed) TO GO TO THE TABLE OF THE LORD, are added at the close of this chapter. It is the only due, and right, and consistent

* It would be invidious, among the many valuable works on confirmation to particularize any. My friend, Mr. Bridges, has one before and another after confirmation, remarkably scriptural and practical, and I select from it his classification of those scriptures which formed the system of his public and pastoral ministry to his own flock, in preparation for the ordinance of confirmation, and in subsequent instruction:—

I.—GENERAL SUBJECT OF DEDICATION TO GOD. Isaiah xliv. 3—5. Jer. i. 4, 5. Rom. vi. 13; xii. 1.

II.—BAPTISMAL VOW.

1. Renunciation *of the devil*, Isaiah xxvi. 13. Ephes. ii. 2. 1 John iii. 8.—*of the world*, John xvii. 14, 15, Rom. xii. 2. 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. James iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15, 16; v. 4, 5.—*of the flesh*, Gal. v. 17—24.

2. Faith—*in God the Father*, Heb. xi. 6.—*in Christ*, John vi. 29; xiv. 1. —*in the Holy Ghost*, John xiv. 15—18; xvi. 7—16.—*in the Gospel*, Mark xvi. 15, 16. Rom. x. 10.

3. Obedience—Matt. xxii. 27—32. John xiv. 15. 1 John v. 3.

III.—ENCOURAGEMENTS. *From the character of Christ*, Isaiah xl. 11. *From his work*, Rev. i. 5, 6.—*From a sense of his love*, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.—*From the promises of his grace*, Prov. viii. 17, 32—36. Matt. xi. 28.—*From the easiness of his service*, Matt. xi. 29, 30.—*From the engagements of the covenant of God*, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Ezek. xxxvi. 27,—*From the privileges of his people*, Deut. xxvi. 16—19.

IV.—WARNINGS. *The responsibility of the vow*, Deut. xxiii. 21—23. Eccles. v. 4, 5.—*The cost of the service*, Luke xiv. 26—33.—*The danger of drawing back*, Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 62. 2 Tim. iv. 10. Heb. x. 38. 2 Peter ii. 20—22. Rev. xxi. 8.

V.—PRAYERS AND RESOLUTIONS. Gen. xxviii. 20—22. Joshua xxiv. 15—27. Ruth i. 15—18. Psalm xxvii. 8; li. 12, 13; cxvi. 12—19; cxix. 116, 117; cxxxix. 23, 24. Jer. xxxi. 18. Acts ix. 6.

VI.—SUITABLE PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE TO CONSIDER.—Psalm xxv. li. Isaiah liii. lv. Luke xv. John iii. Rom. iii. Eph. vi.

course for them. Invariably to keep away from that table, is to renounce their baptismal vows ; to disobey a most plain and touching command of their Redeemer, and to relinquish their Christian profession and privileges, and become real apostates before God. And all this is generally done under the plea of their increasing their responsibility and guilt, by taking up a Christian profession, when they have already, in baptism and confirmation, taken up that profession, and are under the most solemn obligations to live to the glory of God. Oh, let not Satan persuade any thus to neglect the great means of strengthening and refreshing their souls. You are under the same responsibility before God, having been born in a Christian country, baptized in the name of Jesus, and sealed thus by confirmation, even as if you were a communicant, while you are losing all the grace you might gain by obedience which you have already promised, but thus constantly refuse to perform.

There is an important interval between confirmation and going to the Lord's table, which may advantageously be shortened or lengthened, according to the age, knowledge, and character of those confirmed. But I believe increasing experience has led us to the conviction that it is desirable the confirmed should communicate as early as circumstances will allow after confirmation ; and many ministers have found the advantage of having a special communion on so interestiug an occasion, very shortly after the confirmation. If there be much delay in going to the Lord's table, religious impressions made at confirmation become fainter, and the habit of neglecting the Lord's Supper is contracted. The minister thus loses sight of too many whom he would be glad to have within reach of his spiritual attention.

O that our young who have been confirmed, did indeed see that all the ordinances of the Lord's house are full of wisdom, mercy, and goodness, and that they are forfeiting and parting with their real privileges and blessings in neglecting them !

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ABUSES OF BAPTISM.

THROUGH the corruption of man, all the means and helps which God has given for his salvation have been perverted and abused, and have given occasion, alas ! to a more aggravated sin and more heinous transgression. This might weary and exhaust the patience of any created being, but "the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ; there is no searching of his understanding." Isa. xl. 8. Yet that abuse brings down the divine displeasure, and his fearful wrath on those who thus trifle with his goodness, (Rom. ii. 1—6,) and it is unspeakably important for us to be warned of this danger, and deterred by its consequences from so evil and so destructive a course.

Thus St. Paul uses the conduct of Israel as a lesson to Christians, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea : and did all eat the same spiritual meat, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." The apostle then specially mentions these five—lusting after evil things, idolatry, fornication, tempting Christ, and murmuring.

And then he adds, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. x. 1—12.

We see here that the ordinances may be spiritual and heavenly; and yet through earthly and carnal lusts and affections, the benefit of them may be so wholly lost, that God may be displeased with us for the abuse of them, rather than pleased with us for being partakers of them. And if we think that we have not incurred this danger, there is still a special caution addressed to us to take heed lest we fall.

Now it is deeply to be feared that the baptism of the Christian church has been abused quite as much by Christians as the great privileges bestowed upon the Jewish nation were by the Jews. Let us then consider the painful subject of the abuse of baptism; and consider it with great sorrow of heart, for our humiliation and repentance. What are the common abuses of baptism?

1st. WORLDLINESS. This is the more ordinary abuse of it. A Christian State justly wishing to indent religion into every thing, connected baptism with the registry of our names in the records of our country. The effect of this should have been to bring religion, as a living principle, to every inhabitant of the country; but through our sin and unbelief, it has in innumerable cases turned baptism into a mere act of political wisdom and expediency. The promises of God have failed to us through our unbelief. They have not by faith been welcomed and applied to our souls. Baptism has with many become a mere compliance with custom for the sake of secular advantages. Hence they only think of it as a sort of family festivity; a matter in which they must avoid singularity, and compliment their more particular friends by asking them to be sponsors for their children. The service itself has been disregarded, and not understood at all by them. Spiritual blessings have never been thought of. Nor are the children duly reminded of their standing in God's church, their privileges

through faith, and their responsibility. And what can be the issue of such baptisms, but a mockery of God, and his increased displeasure for their irreverence and carnal-mindedness. In vain do such worship him. God gives us grace to see the wickedness of our hypocritical acts of religion, and repent ere it be too late.

2. Formality: a mere bare formal act of religion. Many in these last days have the "form of godliness, but deny the power thereof." It is respectable to keep up outside religion. It is expected by our neighbours. It gives credit to our character. Their Christianity is the established religion of the land, and the ground of their faith rests solely on that which should recommend it to their reverence and full attention. The church to which they profess to belong has appointed it, and it would be thought very singular not to have their children baptized. Besides, there must be, they think, some goodness in doing it; it is taking some trouble for religion, and God will reward them for this goodness. And all the while their minds are full of covetousness and pride, and their ways evil and oppressive. Oh, with what power God speaks of his abhorrence of such inconsistency. Isaiah i. 10—15. The strongest and severest things that the tender and compassionate Saviour ever uttered were against such formalists among the Scribes and Pharisees. (See Matt. xxiii. throughout.) Do we say to such, then, do not bring your children to baptism? No. But we say, Repent of your own broken baptismal vows. See that you yourselves are now in the broad way that leads to destruction. Be converted yourselves, and then you will bring your child in spirit and in truth to baptism.

Another mode of dependance on form is magnifying the outward service, so as to make it to be no baptism where there is not adult baptism and immersion. This, in truth, is a refined self-righteousness, and a magnifying unduly of the outward service, in a religion which, though it retains outward forms, is especially spiritual and heavenly.

3. Superstition is a third abuse of baptism. We have

seen the connection of baptism with regeneration, as a sign, and seal, and means of grace. This has been turned into a mere superstitious confidence in the bare act of baptism, as if baptism and regeneration were the same thing. Notwithstanding the solemn and repeated testimonies of the scriptures, how unavailable the outward act is without the inward change, (Rom. ii. 28, 29 ; ix. 1—5. 1 Cor. vii. 19. Gal. v. 6 ; vi. 15.) notwithstanding the express testimony of the Church of England, that " it is a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism *rightly* are grafted into the church," such persons view baptism almost wholly as the thing signified, and dwell little on its right reception. Thus baptism becomes a cover for delusion, a rest in an outside service, a charm to insure our salvation, and a putting off anxiety about the new heart, instead of an encouragement to seek and attain it. Thus men are supposed to be made Christians by baptism, instead of by being raised to a Christ-like, holy, and heavenly spirit. They rest in the shell of the ordinance, instead of gaining the inward blessing which the ordinance contains for every true believer. We see this in its full power in Popery, and it has led there to all sorts of follies,—baptism of bells, and horses, and asses, and everything calculated to degrade baptism, and to make it absurd and ridiculous. There has also been in the Protestant church much of superstition in holding baptismal regeneration. It is the revulsion of an opposite error—want of faith in God's own appointed means. But it is a serious evil, very dangerous and very delusive ; puffing up the mind with a delusion, as if the whole blessing of regeneration were gained ; when only the sureness of the Lord's promises, and his willingness to bestow it, and a pledge to assure it to us on our repentance and faith, are really gained ; and thus the believer is turned from his proper work, of diligently following after the completed blessing which has been set before him and assured to him.

4. Leaning on man is another abuse of baptism. There

are some who have so expressed themselves, as if the right to administer the sacraments were solely confined to the class of ministers episcopally ordained in REGULAR SUCCESSION from the apostles, and that sacraments by all others were invalid and worthless. Apostolical succession, with right doctrine and holy practice, is, indeed, truly precious, but our church holds not the exclusiveness of such a ministry. (See Art. 23.) Our Reformers speak distinctly here. Bradford says, "We shall not find in all the Scriptures this your essential part of succession of bishops. In Christ's church Antichrist shall sit." Bishop Jewell, speaking in the name of the Church of England, in his Apology, observes, that "St. Paul says that Antichrist should once set up his own tabernacle and stately seat in the temple of God." While we have to be thankful for God's preserving to us the threefold order of bishops, priests, and deacons, of which we find scriptural evidence; and for an orderly succession from the beginning; and a national establishment holding the truth; yet these are valuable mainly for the truth which is thus confirmed while it is held forth; let even a church thus orderly in its external ministry, openly profess and maintain papal error, and we are to separate from it, at the peril of enduring otherwise the divine judgments. Rev. xviii. 18. As for those who separate from a pure and reformed church, established in the country where they live, God alone can truly judge of all the circumstances which led to the separation, and of the sin on both sides which may have occasioned it. Our office is not so much to judge them, as, when we conscientiously approve of an establishment, not to follow them. Those holding the head, Christ Jesus, have manifestly been largely blessed in the conversion of sinners, and the propagation of the gospel; and let us from the heart say, "Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity," even though they follow not us, and we cannot conscientiously follow them.

It is remarkable that, in the Divine wisdom, the chief apostles, Paul and Peter, seem to have purposely abstained

from personally administering the sacrament of baptism. God having foreseen that men in the following ages of the church would overvalue the sacraments, and set them above the ministry of the word, seems to have guided these leading apostles to consign the administration of the ordinance to others. Thus with regard to Cornelius and his friends, "Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Acts x. 48. St. Paul says with regard to the Corinthians, "I thank God I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I baptized in mine own name." 1 Cor. i. 14, 15. And in another case, where there was undoubted authority to baptize, Philip seems to have baptized Simon Magus, and yet his baptism left him "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Acts viii. 14—24.

5. Another and last abuse of the sacrament which we will notice, is WANT OF FAITH IN THE GRACE OF THE SACRAMENT. It is the opposite error to a superstitious dependance upon it, and arose from that over-magnifying of sacraments which distinguished Popery. The Reformers had to contend against this error. The Scotch Reformers observe, "We utterly condemn the vanity of those who affirm sacraments to be nothing but bare and naked signs." Luther was very strenuous in this part of truth. He testified that it was necessary that all partaking of the sacrament should believe ; and in a letter dated Nov. 29, 1518, re-asserts it, stating that it was needful that he who went to the sacrament should believe that he should obtain the grace of the sacrament ; counting that he should deny Christ if he denied this opinion respecting faith. It is the losing sight of this important truth that has been one great source of the objections to the church of England service, which is wholly founded on the reality of faith in those bringing their children to baptism. The union of the grace and the outward sign is a reality ; and the form is found to convey real participation of spiritual blessings to believers : unbelief only makes it fruitless and empty.

How needful, then, earnestly to seek divine grace, that

in none of these ways baptism be abused and its fruit lost! All our approaches to God require watchfulness, humility, reverence, and true faith in his word. His sacraments, as the more mysterious parts of his service and worship, need more especially our caution against unbelief and prayer for faith, that we may receive the promised blessing.

Archbishop Usher noticed the following sins often attending baptism in his day :—"The main care and preparation is about matters of outward pomp and state; everything is fitted and prepared for the purpose, but only that which should chiefly be, viz., the hearts and minds of those that go about a business of that nature. While the sacrament is in performing, the demeanor of many shew that they have a slight opinion of that service; some turning their backs upon it, and going out of the church, so soon as the sermon is done, as if the word was worth the minding, but not the sacrament; others prating and talking all the while, as if there were nothing for them to learn by, no duty for them to perform in that action. Lastly, infants are brought to the sacrament of baptism in their infancy, but are never by their parents taught the doctrine of baptism when they come to years of understanding. Baptism is not made use of as it ought in the whole course of mens' lives. These things shew that men commonly have a mean credit of this ordinance."

It may be well before we proceed to the remedy of these abuses, to point out THE DANGER OF A FORM OF GODLINESS WITHOUT THE POWER.

It is very possible to profess all the truths of the Bible, and not to be saved by those truths. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." How needful then is it to be preserved from so dangerous an error!

Let us mark some of the characters of this error. The doctrines of the gospel of Christ are now generally admitted. There was a time when a confession of election unto holiness, of justification by faith, and the new birth of the Spirit, exposed any one to great reproach and con-

tempt, and few witnessed such a confession but sincere Christians. But now a high profession is rather reputable than otherwise, and holding right doctrines on these points, has ceased to be a distinguishing mark of believing Christians. And so has, the joining religious societies, hearing evangelical truth, and abstaining from the vain and frivolous amusements of the world. A man may do all this, and have only the form of godliness. Equally so may a person hold the doctrines of apostolical succession, church authority, the power of the sacraments, be reviled for these things, and yet be proud, and saying to others, "Come not near to me, for I am holier than thou." Isaiah lxv. 5.

The outward attendance on all religious ordinances is of itself insufficient also to carry a man's hopes above the form of godliness. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me ; in vain do they worship me." Going to the Lord's table is no surer test of true godliness. The wicked will say at the last, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say unto you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

Nor does calling Christ, Lord, nor even doing mighty works in his name, raise us beyond the mere form of godliness. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Nor again does a confession of the doctrine of Christ's speedy coming again, though it be offensive to many in the church of God,—and a profession that he is our Lord, and a going out to meet him,—mark more distinctly the power of godliness. The ten virgins did this, but only "five out of them were wise," had "oil in their vessels,"

and went in with the heavenly Bridegroom to the marriage-supper.

Nor does the belonging to a particular sect everywhere spoken against, and holding the grand truths of Christianity, prove that we are Christian. All the Israelites went out of Egypt, yet "they are not all Israel which are of Israel."

These things are painful and awakening. What is the great failing in these cases? All this may be a religion of man's making, and not of God's; the power of nature and not the power of grace. It is all consistent with an unconverted heart, with a supreme love of self and the world, and may be without any real love to God and devotedness to his will. It may be the life of sense and sight, and not of faith and hope and love.

Let us cry, dear Christian reader, mightily to God for that which he alone can bestow, the new heart and the new spirit, and for grace to do, as well as to know, God's holy will.

Mark in the Lord's prayer the three leading desires of him who has the power of godliness: "Hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." When these are our main and governing aims and principles and desires, then have we the power of godliness, the work of the Spirit in our hearts; when these are dearer to us than our own glory, and interests, and will, then may we know that we have the spirit of Christ, and "shall not be ashamed before him at his coming."

The grand cause of the abuses of baptism, as it was with the Jews respecting circumcision, is UNBELIEF. After the apostle had stated the unavailableness of outward circumcision to the Jew (Rom. ii. 28, 29), he asks, "What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith

of God without effect? God forbid." The unbelief of some lost them the blessing : but believers really gained it.

The REMEDY OF THE ABUSES corresponds to their cause. We must return to faith in God's promises, and there must be the answer of a good conscience. Thus St. Peter states it ; " Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter iii. 21. Faith looks at the risen Saviour (Rom. iv. 24, 25), and that complete deliverance from guilt and sin obtained for fallen man through his death and subsequent acceptance by the Father, as our Head, Mediator, and Advocate. Faith sees our sins washed away in his blood, and our souls to be renewed by his Spirit, and beholds in the ordinance of baptism God's testimony and seal to these precious truths. And thus our own conscience is purified ; " the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. ix. 11—14. Under the gracious teaching of the Divine Spirit, who takes of Christ's things and shews them to us, I see God, my loving and reconciled Father, who no longer imputes sin to me. I freely confess all my guilt, and have no subterfuge or self-justification under which the truth is masked ; my conscience is cleared from fraud and deception, and I acknowledge both my sinfulness and my Saviour. And this concurs with God's gracious design : " If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I can now love God and delight in him and his ways. Every bar between him and my soul is by his own grace wholly removed, and I have liberty of access to him with the confidence of a child.

Let all who come to baptism thus see and know their true standing as Christians before God, and all the replies in baptism will be " the answer of a good conscience towards God : " we shall hate and renounce sin, for that brought Jesus to the cross ; we shall believe the great

truths of the gospel, for they are our only hope ; we shall delight in God's will and ways, for " the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us ;" and baptism, no longer abused, will be improved as God designed it, as a choice and precious help in the whole Christian life.

A PRAYER, TO BE DELIVERED FROM THE MERE FORM OF GODLINESS WITHOUT THE POWER.

O Lord, thou hast said that in the last days perilous times shall come, and men shall be lovers of their own selves, and, while full of many and great sins, shall have still a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof ; and I am afraid, when I look at my own heart and life, lest this should be my state.

I do indeed confess before thee, not only that I greatly offend by transgressing in many things thy holy law, but also that those holy truths which I hold and profess, fail, through my unbelief and corruption, of producing corresponding feelings in my heart, and practical obedience in my life. All those holy services also, in which I outwardly engage, are continually wanting in that truth and spirituality which thou seekest in them that worship thee. Though my profession may be such as to give me the form of godliness, yet am I compelled to acknowledge how little I feel of the power to give life and energy within.

O Lord, have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me ! Impart thy saving grace to my soul. Hear me speedily, O Lord, for my spirit sinks within me. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. O visit me with thy salvation. Satisfy me early with thy mercy. On thee only do I wait. My expectation is from thee. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God. Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake.

Give me not merely a name to live, but quicken me together with Christ ; give me the hidden life with Christ in God. Grant me power, through the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body, and to set my affections on things above, that when Christ, who is my life, shall appear, I may appear with him in glory. Hear me for his name's sake.

CHAPTER XVIII.

APOSTASY AFTER BAPTISM.

The holy scriptures have plainly revealed a falling away or apostasy in the Christian church; an apostasy partaking of the character and guilt of unfaithfulness in marriage to the solemn vows which bind husband and wife together. Thus St. Paul shews, that before our Lord Jesus Christ was to return, there would "come the falling away (η αποστασια) first," and "the man of sin" would "be revealed, the son of perdition." 2 Thess. ii. 3. Afterwards described by St. John as "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Rev. xvii. 1—5. The importance of this is strongly stated by St. Paul: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart (αποστησονται, apostatize) from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." 1 Tim. iv. 1. And he exhorts all Christians, on account of the danger of coming short of the heavenly rest, promised to the faithful, through their personal unbelief: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing (αποστηναι) from the living God." Heb. iii. 12.

The fearful extent to which this apostasy has taken place in the churches of Christ, is but too apparent on the face the earth. Where are the churches of Turkey, Asia Minor, Arabia, Persia, Egypt, and North Africa? They have

apostatized either to open Mahomedanism, or to a most superstitious and worthless form of Christianity. Where are the churches, in their primitive beauty, of the great European kingdoms of the Roman empire ? They have in the main apostatized to Popery. Where again is the original purity, zeal, and love of the Reformed churches? They have sunk, in large masses, into a name to live, and still lower, into a covert or even open infidelity. Truly the falling away has already taken place. And it is the plain duty, where apostacy becomes the marked character of a church and community, " from such withdraw thyself." 1 Tim. vi. 5. If they separate from God, we are to separate from them.

When we consider the solemn promises made at baptism, and the public confession of Christ there made, which, if it were what it ought to have been, was " the answer of a good conscience towards God," it becomes important to consider in what light we are to view the subsequent sins of a Christian, and how they affect his standing before God. It is a painful and humbling, but it may with God's blessing be a very profitable, subject of enquiry.

And it must be confessed that ALL SIN COMMITTED BY CHRISTIANS has in it the nature of apostacy, or a falling away from our profession of Christ. " All unrighteousness is sin, and " yet " there is a sin not unto death." 1 John v. 17. There is in every believer the flesh and the spirit ; the old man and the new man ; the carnal nature and the divine nature. " For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 17. Under this weakness of fallen nature, while the Christian excuses not himself, but in every thing blames and condemns himself, his heavenly Father regards him with tender pity, forgives all his iniquities, and heals all his diseases. The great question here is the state of the mind, and affections, and will. Is there a real hatred of sin, and of ourselves for it? Can we say with holy Job, " I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job

xlii. 6. Is the real bent of our mind and will against sin? Is "the spirit willing," though "the flesh is weak." Matt. xxvi. 41. As in the case of the gifts of love, so in the case of all our doings, "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2 Cor. viii. 12.

Yet let us remember here, that all careless walking, unbelief, unwatchfulness, indolence, selfishness, indulged pride, covetousness, and worldly-mindedness, are seriously prejudicial to our soul now, and tend materially to affect our final standing and reward; for God's saints also shall be judged and rewarded according to their works. Let us covet earnestly the best gifts, the highest graces, and the most devoted life. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." 2 John 8.

There is another stage of sin which is more serious and fearful; A STATE OF HABITUAL WORLDLINESS which manifests that the soul has not yet been truly converted to God, and so is now in the way of death. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John ii. 15. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God?" James iv. 4. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. vi. 4. This is the state in which the vast mass of baptized Christians are now living, and it is unspeakably important that they should see their danger ere it be too late, and not imagine that a Christian name and calling will avail to any thing but their increased guilt and condemnation, if they are really unfaithful to Christ.

Let such consider, that God our Saviour really requires of all his disciples separation from the world; that he absolutely commands all his followers, living in the midst of an evil world, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." 2 Cor. vi. 17. Worldliness of spirit is then in itself disobedience to a plain command, and implies a state of alienation from God, and death in sins. But in one who

has been baptized, and made promises of renouncing the world, it is not merely a state of disobedience, but a state of apostacy and departure from the faith of Christ ; not indeed avowed, or perhaps felt, but still in reality such.

Consider, then, your true state. How can you bear the thought of in spirit denying Christ, who died for you, and renouncing his religion, the only hope of a sinner ! You profess to believe Christianity to be true, the only true religion in the world. You would shrink from an open denial of Christ, and yet, like Sardis, it must be said to you, " Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." Rev. iii. 1.

This apostacy may be seen in a departure FROM THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL. The direction to Timothy was, " Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." 2 Tim. i. 13, 14. How soon thus the churches of Ephesus (Acts xx.), Galatia, and Corinth turned away from the simplicity of the faith ! And how offensive, in our days, to multitudes of Christians, are the scriptural doctrines of our fallen state, salvation by grace, regeneration by the Spirit, separation from the world, the power and temptations of Satan and evil spirits, the return of Christ, and the eternal misery of the wicked ; while the experimental doctrine of having access through one Mediator by one Spirit to the Father, is counted wildness and enthusiasm. Real ignorance of the scriptures, pride, and the lusts of this world, are the cause of this departure.

The same apostacy may be seen in a departure FROM THE HOLINESS OF THE GOSPEL. This is clearly predicted as the special character of the last days, and all the minute particulars apply with frightful accuracy to the character of professed Christians at this time. " This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,

unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. What an awful picture we have here of baptized Christians in the last days! Well may it lead us to much self-examination, asking, as the apostles did, "Lord, is it I?" and also to follow St. Peter's advice, and pass the time of our sojourning here in fear. Perfectly vain is it to trust in outward privileges, and to cry, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these" (Jer. vii. 4), if there be such black marks of practical apostacy in our lives. The workers of iniquity, whatever their name or profession, will fail of the kingdom of God. Matt. vii. 22, 23. O how much is holiness even scorned in the Christian world! All close walking with God, strictness of holy living and conversation, and purity of evangelical godliness, is intolerable among multitudes baptized to all this. And what is this but apostacy? Let us watch against the beginnings of this. Let us keep under the body, and "bring it into subjection," as the apostle did, lest, "after preaching to others," he "should become a castaway." 1 Cor. ix. 27. Above all, let us more constantly, and closely, and fervently apply to the Lord Jesus Christ, believing in his grace, and looking for the strength of his Spirit, that we may attain that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

Once more, this apostacy may be seen in a departure FROM THE WORSHIP AND ORDINANCES OF GOD. It is perfectly appalling to know what vast multitudes in a professedly Christian country, and among baptized men and women, and those calling themselves Protestants, as protesting against the errors of corrupt churches, wholly neglect Christian worship on the Lord's day. By far the largest part of the population in the metropolis of this country do not attend public worship at all. It is fearful to consider in what various ways the Sabbath is broken;

by trading, by travelling, by pleasure-taking, by Sunday newspapers, by visits of dissipation, by mail-coaches and letters, and a thousand other forms of turning the day from God, to whom it belongs, to the world which men thus prefer before Him. The neglect of the Lord's Supper is of itself an apostacy from our Christian profession, and is there anything like a tenth of the population of a Christian land, all baptized in the name of Jesus, and pledged thus to obey his commands, who observe his last and dying precept:—"This do in remembrance of me?"

We may well speak of these things with weeping and mourning, sighing over the abominations of our professedly Christian country, and solemnly warning all men of the wrath of God hanging over us, for these abominations. Let us remember the solemn and more than once repeated warning of Christ, applicable both to individuals and nations: "Salt is good, but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Luke xiv. 34, 35.

But supposing all this brought home to the conscience; the sinner awakened, and led to see that his baptism to him has been no spiritual regeneration, and avails him nothing, while without the real vital and inward change,—what must be his course? His way is perfectly plain. The day of grace continues: the throne of grace is open; "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared." The love of God is still the same to him, as when he was received into the church by baptism. The Saviour stands as it were with open arms inviting him: "Come unto me: Hear, and your souls shall live." There is full pardon ready; there is free salvation provided; the prodigal child who has wasted his father's goods will not be rejected, but, on his real return, welcomed with joy, and embraced with ardent affection. "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found: call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and

he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." What can be more gracious, more righteous, or more full of mercy than the ways of our God! Oh, that we felt this as we ought, and loved him as we ought!

It is contrary to the whole spirit of the Bible to place the difficulties in the way of the repentance of Christians, who have fallen into sin, which some have done. If, under the law, transgressors were freely invited to return to God, much more under the gospel are the worst characters freely invited to forsake all their sins, and receive the freest pardon and welcome. In this spirit our church speaks to the very worst, to blasphemers of God, hinderers or slanderers of his word, adulterers, the envious and malicious, or those living in any other crime, to repent of their sins and come to the table of the Lord.

The view sought to be established cannot, as those who present it to us imagine, be healthful. It tends to lower the standard of holiness on one side, and to produce despair on the other. It is not a scriptural guard, but a self-righteous perversion of God's ordinance, bringing the soul into the spirit of bondage, and destructive of the spirit of grace and adoption. To all classes of sinners under the gospel, with the exception of those who sin against the Holy Ghost, there is no impediment to returning at once to God, and enjoying the full consolations of his gracious acceptance and forgiving love. God forbid that any ambassador of Christ, instead of proclaiming the word of reconciliation, and beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God, should place barriers in the way of their return that God has never placed; instead of setting forth the infinite mercies of the Father who saw afar off and ran to meet the prodigal son on his returning, should, like the Scribes and Pharisees, murmur objections against the reception of sinners. O how different from the view given in innumerable passages of God's holy word! "Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord

is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him." Isaiah xxx. 18.

But we must proceed yet farther to the last stage of sin, OPEN AND WILFUL APOSTACY FROM THE TRUTH. Many and solemn are the cautions in the word of God against this: and though it may be difficult for us to gain the full meaning of them, yet there is much most awakening, and solemn, and seasonable instruction for us. The warnings in the epistle to the Hebrews are especially quickening: "It is impossible," says the apostle, "for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." Heb. vi. 4—6. The passage is manifestly intended as a solemn warning to all professors of the gospel, against the danger of apostacy from a credible profession founded on participation of many of the benefits of the gospel. It is not merely sin after baptism; the scripture no where justifies us in identifying enlightening with baptism, whatever may be the views which some of the Nicene fathers, in the decay of the gospel, had on this point. But it shews, at least, the extreme difficulty, if not the positive impossibility, of a renewal unto repentance, in the case of one who has had light, and knowledge, and has felt the power, in some degree, of the gospel,—yet has apostatized. The nature of this sin is more fully set before us afterwards—"If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath

done despite unto the spirit of grace!" Heb. x. 26—29. How watchful should this make us against any wilful sin, which may go on and issue in this final apostacy and irremediable ruin! The treating with contempt the Spirit of grace, seems to be the same sin which our Lord calls "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matt. xii. 31, 32. And with that sin mentioned by St. John, respecting those committing which he gives no encouragement to pray—"There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it." 1 John v. 16.*

Truly awful and alarming are these solemn warnings of the New Testament. All sin is not indeed of this character, and the most holy cannot say he has no sin; for if "we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;" and every sinner confessing and forsaking sin will find mercy. Yet such warnings shew us that when we have really known the truth and yet allowed a wilful indulgence in sin, it may go on to that "conscience seared as with a hot iron," which makes a man wholly callous and hardened. In such a case, nothing can touch his heart or awaken him, and he remains impenitent, unbelieving and prayerless, till he perishes. Those in this state will wilfully speak evil, knowing what they say is false, of the ways of Christ, reviling and blaspheming against the things of the Spirit of God, and this after having once been enlightened to see their reality and excellence. We have seen such daring and infidel men, blazoning their shame in our land, and the number seems unhappily in-

* The different conduct of St. Paul towards Alexander, the coppersmith, for whom he prayed not, but on whom he pronounced a solemn curse, and his conduct towards those who forsook him, but for whom he prayed that it might not be laid to their charge (2 Tim. iv. 14—16.) illustrates the distinction of St. John. In one case we see hardened malignant enmity, in a professor; (see 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.) and in the other case only the fear of man overcoming their faith: for the malignant apostate he prays not; for the timid disciple he prays. Our own Reformation, in such cases as Gardiner and Bonner, hardened in apostacy, compared with Cranmer, and many others who at first failed, and then stood firm for Christ our Lord, may illustrate also the same awful truth.

creasing, as well as the blasphemy becoming more conspicuous and glaring.

Beloved Christian readers, let us be warned in time ; "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Let us watch against the beginnings of evil ; let us keep in view our baptismal privileges, as the motive to baptismal holiness ; let us remember always that we are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, that we may "continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel ;" and let us firmly retain that hope which will be an anchor of the soul, keeping us steady amidst the storms of this evil world. It will be a helmet of salvation, covering our head in the day of battle ; yes, he that has this hope in Jesus will be found "purifying himself even as Christ is pure."

I cannot conclude this subject without adverting to a deeply interesting and affecting consideration—the danger of NATIONAL APOSTACY IN OUR COUNTRY. The general tendency of public measures, for a considerable period, has been to throw open the government of the country to persons not holding the great and essential doctrines of the gospel. At the settlement of our English constitution in 1688, Papists and persons denying the doctrine of the blessed Trinity were expressly excepted from favour. The pure form of Christianity maintained by our church was generally viewed as most accordant with the word of God, and therefore most calculated to promote social happiness , and thus the church of England, which holds all the great truths of the gospel of Christ, was sanctioned, established, and every where through the land nationally maintained. Dissenters, from conscientious scruples, but holding the main truths of the gospel, were not merely tolerated, but encouraged in all the good they sought to effect, as a really valuable auxiliary to a church establishment. Luke ix. 49, 50. Papists, and idolators, and Socinians as not holding the head, and Jews as rejecting Christ, were discouraged. Thus our constitution was truly scriptural.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, were nationally acknowledged and honoured. His blessing has been signified in our national elevation, peace, preservation and prosperity.

But our national profession of these things has become, in the lapse of time, exceedingly formal. Step after step has been taken to weaken it. The Protestant character of our government has been cast off by Socinians and Papists having been admitted to share in that power which Christ has entrusted to us (Matt. xxviii. 18. John xix. 11.) as a protestant nation, for his kingdom and glory. Step after step is taken in marriages, in baptism, in education, to dissever the church of England from the nation. Attempts have been made to admit the Jews into our government, and so wholly throw off its Christian character. Step after step is taken, in the maintenance of Papal priests and Papal schools, at home and in our colonies, to break down our national testimony to God's truth as set forth in our national religious testimonies.

This, however, is but one part, though a very awakening symptom indeed, of our tendencies to apostacy. The whole character of our legislation, in its prevailing features, is of this cast. The measures of Parliament, constituted as Parliament now is, are national measures. The sin is the sin of the country. And what is it prominently marks the character of the country, notwithstanding all the struggles of the church of Christ, in the midst of it, but an INTENSE MONEY-GETTING SPIRIT, regardless of all the sufferings of others, if property may be enlarged; and a consequent fearful oppression by the wealthy, of the lower orders; and a re-acting hatred of the upper classes in the lower? This is eminently seen, as the author has observed on another occasion, in the state of the agricultural poor and the factory-children. Let us remember how full the scripture is of strong testimonies against oppression and grinding the faces of the poor; what stern reproofs are given against oppressors, ESPECIALLY WHERE PROFESSING RELIGION; and how constantly the ruin of nations is ascribed to this

cause ;—and we may indeed have just fears that heavy judgments hang over our country. An unholy thirst for gain, without reference to God's will and glory, or the good of man, shoots very deep into the heart of our land, and spreads very wide over it. The greater part of the misery that now oppresses our country is from making haste to be rich, and this, connected with widely-spread and largely-received false and infidel political principles of the wealth of nations being their prosperity, without reference to moral character. Hence men eagerly pursue the accumulation of property, whatever distress or ruin it may bring on others; justifying themselves by that which should be their guard, —the general practice. Exod. xxiii. 2. Matt. vii. 13. But instead of attaining security and happiness by this selfishness, they are labouring utterly in vain. Hab. ii. 13. The word of God speaks repeatedly and most strongly against this really self-destructive course, and shows the great *personal* danger of pursuing riches to the oppression of the poor. Prov. xxix. 20, 21. Isaiah v. 8—10. Jer. vi. 23 ; viii. 9, 10 ; xxii. 13—17. Micah ii. 1—3. Hab. ii. 9—11, and James v. 1—4. May the eyes of those making a credible profession of godliness, be opened to see, and their resolutions strengthened to renounce, this great evil. Whatever present losses their singularity may occasion them, their real gain will be unspeakably great. The vanity and emptiness of all excuses founded on the misconduct of the poor, for neglecting their real misery, will be apparent to a Christian.

The real character of this idolatry of wealth is an apostacy. When we have ceased to trust in the Lord, we trust in idols ; (1 Tim. 6. 17.) when we have ceased to delight in the Lord, we delight in idols. Nothing is more clear than that covetousness is idolatry ; (Ephes. v. 6. Col. iii. 5.) nothing is more clear than that idolatry is apostacy, (Deut. vii. 4 ; xiii. 1—10.) and that apostacy of a nation is connected with national judgments. 2 Kings xvii. 2. Chron. xxxvi.*

* The great exertions of so many professors of religion, chiefly among

Many other signs of a growth of apostacy might be mentioned which are set before us in the scriptures, (2 Peter ii. 10—22, and Jude 10—16.) and too apparent in Christendom. It is joyfully acknowledged also there is a revival of good to a most encouraging extent, and that God by his omnipotent grace, is more and more preparing the way for the full triumph of his own purposes of love to man. May these things lead Christians to see the great necessity of intercession for our country, of heartily promoting the reviving good, of bearing witness against growing evils, and of a humble, and broken, and contrite spirit, instead of that proud high-mindedness which so much characterizes us as a people, wherever we go, though the Lord has said, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." May they especially lead us to that state of mind to which the prophet Joel called Israel—"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, Turn ye even to me, with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

Let our baptismal privileges and vows be recognized, acknowledged and acted upon, then shall we return from our too extended national apostacy to our heavenly Father, and use the words—"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son."

Dissenters, to set aside all national establishments of religion, which they openly avow is, in their view, the root of all evil in the church of Christ; and the vast strength of the current of Papal and infidel men who join in this effort, and their influence upon those in power at this day, is another fearful indication of approach to national apostacy. The heavenly host rejoiced (Rev. xii. 10, 11,) in that national triumph of Christianity which such mistaken men would, in their self-wisdom and ignorance of God's word, overthrow. Let not any be deceived by piety of expressions and intermingling of prayers and praises, or peaceful professions or pretences of conscience; as we NATIONALLY honour God and maintain his truth, he will NATIONALLY honour us. Let us remember the sure word of prophecy, and how we are guarded against the Korah spirit of the age, (Numbers xvi. Jude 11.) and may we, before it be too late, like Nebuchadnezzar, be brought to give the glory of our kingdom to God. Dan. iv. 34—37.

CHAPTER XIX.

BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE.

The ordinance of baptism, though simple and elementary in its first meaning, is full of deep truth. While by its visible form and public administration it impresses all men outwardly, and calls for attention and observation from all who witness it—leading them to "say one to another, What meaneth this?" it has an extent of instruction that well repays all their inquiries.

Joined to Christian baptism is the baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Thus John the Baptist prepares the way for the baptism of Christ; "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. iii. 11. It is in substance repeated in all the gospels, Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 17. John i. 26—33. though apparently on different occasions.

It is this baptism which we would now consider more fully. The spirit of John humbling himself, that his and our Lord might be justly exalted, should be noticed. He seems to delight in saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease—he is mightier than I—I baptize with water, and he with the Holy Ghost." May this spirit ever animate our minds!

A leading truth here set before us is the difference and distinction between man's administration and the Lord's administration : that we may see " that neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase," that our eyes may be directed not to the minister, but to the minister's Lord and Master, and expect all the blessing from him alone ; he refers all men from himself to Christ. May all we who are ministers copy so instructive a pattern! Yes, may every follower of Jesus seek only the exaltation of his Saviour!

The baptism with the Holy Ghost seems to be a degree of privilege and blessing, beyond that of regeneration and conversion. The apostles were truly converted to God, when the Lord said to them, " Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you ; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high " (Luke xxiv. 49) ; and again, " Wait for the promise of the Father which ye have heard of me. For truly John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." Acts i. 4. Accordingly they received from our Lord a fuller blessing at the appointed time : " When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were siting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts ii. 1—4. We have here the plain record of the fulfilment of the promise, and it is manifestly an enlargement of gift and privilege beyond ordinary conversion.

The same gifts were bestowed on Cornelius and his friends, when Peter preached, Acts x. 44—47 ; and we see the same enlarged blessing in the baptism of John's disciples at Ephesus. Paul then " finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed ? and they said unto him, We have not so much

as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." They had only been baptized into John's baptism of repentance. On farther instruction "they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Acts xix. 1—7.

In these instances the gift of tongues was connected with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The apostles had before received power to work miracles of healing (Luke ix. 2), as had the seventy disciples. Luke x. 9. Before the day of Pentecost, they went "through the towns preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere" (Luke ix. 6); and could say, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name" (Luke x. 17); but the promised baptism of the Holy Ghost gave a deeper and fuller privilege; the healing of diseases is connected with the body and more without; the speaking with tongues is connected with the mind, and addresses the understanding.

Yet the outward miracles are not so much the essential element of the privilege and blessing, as the outward drapery manifesting the inward teaching and instruction. The outward miracles soon ceased; the inward energy and power yet remains. It may be seen, in the 13th and 14th of Corinthians, what is the real place of the outward gift, as contrasted with the inward grace of love; and the gift of tongues even is put far below the real edification of our neighbour. The apostle says, "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." 1 Cor. xiv. 19. And he explicitly declares, "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not."

What then is the designed blessing intended for all the church in this baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire; which is a degree of grace beyond the baptism of water unto repentance? It seems to be this,—those who duly improve the ordinance of the first baptism shall have larger communications of grace, fitting them for more extensive

usefulness, for the fuller fellowship of Christ's sufferings here, and the fuller glory hereafter ; and they shall be safe and blessed in that real and purifying fire which is so clearly predicted as yet to come.

The remarks of the Christian fathers on this, will prepare the way for farther explanatiou of it. Chrysostom, speaking of St. John's baptism says, "John the Baptist proceeds most wisely : for at his own baptism he speaks only of things full of fear and terror, as of being cut down and cast out as a generation of vipers ; but when he speaks of Christ's baptism, he announces good things which might refresh their minds. For he neither brings among them the axe nor the cut-down tree, nor the burning and casting into the fire, nor the wrath to come, but the forgiveness of sins, the pardon of guilt, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, adoption, brotherhood, the comfort of heirship, and the large gifts of the Holy Spirit. For all these are pointed out when he says he will baptize you with the Holy Ghost, the very figure declaring the abundance of grace. For he does not say he will give you the Holy Ghost, but he will baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and by the addition of fire shewing the energy and efficacy of grace. Weigh then in what mind it is very likely the hearers then were, thinking that they should soon become like the prophets and great men : for he therefore mentions fire that he may recal them to their memory. For the greater part of those visions which they had were by fire. So God spoke to Moses in the bush, and so to all the people on Mount Sinai, and so to Ezekiel in Cherubim." *

In another place Chrysostom observes, "Because Christ is judge, he baptizes with fire, that is, with temptations, for hereby as with fire he burns the flesh, that it may not spring forth in evil concupiscence. For the flesh does not fear spiritual punishments, but carnal ; therefore he sends on his servants temptations in the flesh, that the flesh fearing these straits may not bring forth evil concupiscence." †

* See Chrysostom on Malachi iii. 11.
† See Quotations in Mayer's Commentary.

Jerome thus elucidates this passage: "He speaks of fire, foretelling the fiery tongues, which came upon the faithful, for the Holy Ghost is fire; or else he baptizes with the Holy Ghost for the present, and with fire hereafter, according to that of the apostle, the fire shall try every man's work." *

Augustine remarks, "But what John said" by fire, "although it may also be understood of the tribulation which those who believe should suffer for the name of Jesus; yet it is not without cause that the same Holy Spirit may also be signified by the name of fire. Wherefore also, in his coming it is said "there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Hence also the Lord himself says, "I came to send fire upon earth." Hence also the apostle says, "Fervent in spirit," because hence love is fervent. For it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. To such fervour what the Lord says is contrary, "the love of many shall wax cold." But perfect charity is the perfect gift of the Holy Ghost. But that is prior which relates to the forgiveness of sins, by which kindness we are brought out of the power of darkness; aud the prince of this world, who works in the children of unbelief by no other force than society and obligation of sin, is cast out by our faith. For in the Holy Ghost, by whom the people of God are gathered together in one, the unclean spirit who is divided against himself is ejected." †

These various truths seem all comprehended in the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. The baptism with the Holy Ghost includes ALL THESE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS which Augustine and Chrysostom mention. The visible descent of cloven tongues like as of fire was a literal fulfilment of the promises, as well as an instructive emblem, shewing the character of that baptism wherewith the apostles were really baptized, as THE BAPTISM OF TEMPTA-

* See Jerome in *loco.*

† Augustine's Sermon on Matthew xi. 28. vol. v. p. 275. Suicer, in his Thesaurus, vol. i. under the head of baptism gives much information respecting the sentiments of the fathers on this subject.

TION and suffering, to which Chrysostom also alludes ; and the baptism with fire seems to have a final reference to that LAST FIRE of which the scriptures speak so much, and to which Jerome alludes.

Let us first consider baptism with the Holy Ghost in its purifying nature, as including chiefly SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. The Holy Spirit is conveyed to men in various measures, and with lower and higher degrees of purifying influence. We have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us." Rom. xii. 6. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii. 4—6. "And as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1 Peter iv. 10. We have seen that a baptism of the Spirit is a larger blessing than an ordinary gift of the Spirit ; so being "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 4 ; iv. 31 ; xiii. 52,) is a richer benefit than being "a partaker of the Holy Ghost." Heb. vi. 4. The baptism with fire is a more purifying baptism than that with water. Water cleanses the outside ; fire refines from the inward dross. We see this in our Lord himself ; he was first baptized with water, and at that baptism "he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Matt. iii. 16. But this was not the whole of his baptism ; he had a baptism of fire to pass through. As his type the paschal lamb was to be roasted with fire, so the Lord himself was to pass through that fiery tribulation of his last suffering. To this he alludes, when he says—"I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I if it be already kindled. But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." Luke xii. 49, 50. And he went through that fiery baptism, and so the Captain of our salvation "learned obedience by the things that he suffered, and was made perfect through suffering." Heb. ii. 10 ; v. 8, 9. There is then a growing communication of

the Holy Ghost to be hoped for and sought. We are "to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and to be more plentifully and abundantly enriched with "the fruit of the Spirit." O let us not be content without a growing and full baptism unto holiness.

There is also A BAPTISM OF SUFFERINGS, which is designed to be a real privilege and blessing. This is opened very distinctly in the gospel ; when the two sons of Zebedee wished to be nearest to our Lord on his throne of glory, he asks them, "Are ye able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with. They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with : but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Matt. xx. 22, 23. Here is a baptism of sufferings set before them as the way to glory. And this harmonizes with many testimonies of God's word. "Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Mark ix. 49. "We must through much tribulation, enter the kingdom of heaven" (Acts xiv. 22) ; "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." Rom. viii. 17. "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him : if we suffer we shall also reign with him." 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. In this view our Lord was foretold, "He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Nor is this suffering baptism without a full present as well as future blessing. It is connected with intense love, purity, and holiness ; it is joined with the richest consolation ; it is the way to the highest stages of attainment in the school of Christ. Jesus says, "Every one shall be perfected as his Master." Luke vi. 40, marginal reading.

Higher degrees of Christian holiness are attained thus, and larger communications of the Holy Spirit are thus imparted. Hence it is viewed by the sacred writers (and in conformity with them by the early martyrs) as a privilege to be desired, and not as an evil to be shunned. Thus our Lord speaks of it as a blessing, and that the highest and last which he mentions. Matt. v. 10, 11. Thus St. Paul was privileged (Acts ix. 16), and desired "the fellowship of his sufferings, and to be made conformable to his death;" and he comforts those to whom he thus wrote by telling them, "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in his name, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. i. 29; iii. 10. So the apostle Peter calls Christians to JOY, rather than surprise, at their sufferings. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter iv. 12, 13.

The spiritual blessedness of this suffering, accompanied with the power of the Holy Ghost, is, that it produces in the heart a more intense and burning abhorrence of sin as the source of all evil; a more deep sympathy with the vindictive righteousness of God, as being in reality holy love, and a more fervent devotedness of spirit in all things to him, who makes "his ministers a flaming fire."

Fervent with this zeal, with a living fire; a live coal from the altar of God laid upon his mouth, Isaiah cries, in answer to the inquiry, "Whom shall I send? Here am I; send me." Isaiah vi. 6, 7. Touched with the same fire, Jeremiah, who had shrunk from his office, when he had to meet the daring infidelity of his people, receives the promise, "Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them." Jer. v. 14. And the suffering witnesses in the midst of the hurt designed to be inflicted on them, rise superior to all their sufferings, and "fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them,

he must in this manner be killed. Rev. xi. 5. Thus suffering is connected with ability to give solemn warnings to call men to repentance, and awaken their consciences as with a burning fire to their true state. Few have been largely blessed in the church of Christ who have not been great sufferers.

The final BAPTISM OF OUR WORLD WITH FIRE seems as Jerome points out, to be included. There is a spiritual fire going on now, through trials and afflictions, under the eye of the great Refiner. Mal. iii. 2, 3. But there is a real and visible fire coming, of which Malachi afterwards speaks: "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch; but unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Mal. iv. 1, 2. This is contrasted (2 Peter iii.) with the deluge which once destroyed the earth. It is a discriminating, purifying, and destroying fire; the wheat gathered, the chaff burned up; the wheat put in the garner, the tares bound in bundles and burned in the fire.

We have a remarkable account of this awful baptism. 1 Cor. iii. The apostle is speaking of ministers of the gospel as labourers together with God, and of the church as God's building; of himself, as having laid the only foundation, Christ Jesus, and of others, builders thereon, and charges them, "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon;" and then he goes on to set forth the coming trial of everything in the approaching day of manifestation. "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet, so as by fire."

1 Cor. iii. 12—15. He afterwards, alluding to the same truths, says, "He that judgeth me is the Lord, therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God." 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5. The man of sin, "thinking to change times and laws" as he pleases, for his own elevation and profit, (Dan. vii. 25.) has anticipated, by a fancied purgatory of his own, this trial by fire, as he has anticipated the millennial reign of the saints by his worship and honour paid to them now; but it is clear this passage refers not to a hidden state, but to a day of open manifestation that will declare it before all men; and his perversion of God's truth must not keep us from that truth.

The apostle seems first to refer to himself and other teachers, and to set forth the need of great watchfulness as to the truths which they declared, even when they laid the right foundation: that all should be the gold, silver, and precious stones of God's word, (Psalm xix. 10; cxix. 72. Prov. viii. 10; xvi. 16. 1 Tim. iv. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 10. Isaiah liv. 11—14) which alone will stand the fire; and not the wood, hay, and stubble of man's inventions. (Prov. xxx. 6. Jer. xxiii. 28. Matt. xv. 6—9. Acts xx. 30. Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 2. Col. ii. 18—23. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.) There seems also to be under this first reference a farther application to all Christians. For in the passage immediately following the one last quoted, (1 Cor. iv. 5,) he adds, "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written; that no one of you be puffed up for one against another." 1 Cor. iv. 6. We have, then, in the dealings of God with his ministers, shadowed forth his dealings with all men according to the law of works. "Every one of you must give account of himself" to God. Rom. xiv. 12. That which is emphatically in contrast with the day of grace and salvation, called in scripture the

day of judgment, is a season not only of the separation of the righteous from the wicked, but also a period in which all the sins of the righteous then living will be for ever removed : "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." In what manner this will take place, what the revelation by fire may be, what the loss may be which some may suffer, is yet in a great measure hidden from us. We may easily imagine how pure and searching must be the divine holiness ; "our God even is a consuming fire," and may well ask who shall stand in his presence, when he is "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." Our safety is in building on the sure foundation, Christ Jesus, and receiving all those truths of his word which form the gold, silver, and precious stones, that we may be sanctified by them, and so "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." But if the righteous through suffering reach their glory ; if there be a "tribulation, even the great one" yet to take place in this lower world, that "the great multitude which no man can number" may come out of it, "having their robes washed and made white in the blood of the lamb," (Rev. vii. 14.) what will become of obstinate and wilful sinners ? "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God ? and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ?" 1 Peter iv. 17, 18.

How awful are the scriptural accounts of this day to them ! "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction." 2 Thess. i. 9. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. We know him that hath said, Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. x. 26—31.

Corresponding to this, is Isaiah's description of the judg-

ments. "For behold the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isaiah lxvi. 15, 16.

The practical lesson to Christians, which St. Peter draws from this baptism of our world with fire, is most important, and how can we obey it, if we are not even looking for this fire? "Wherefore, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

But the most fearful and dreadful part of these judgments is, that ETERNAL FIRE which shall consume the obstinately and perseveringly wicked? It has been the great art of Satan, both by infidels altogether, and, also by some who have "turned aside from the truth," to persuade men that this fire is not eternal. Let any one look at the meaning of the Greek word *αιωνιος*, the term rendered everlasting in the New Testament seventy times,) and see if we can possibly be justified in giving it a lower sense than a real and proper eternity.* O how dangerous it is to set our short-sighted wisdom against the infinite wisdom of Jehovah; our own reasoning powers against the word of the living God? When he has graciously, for our preservation revealed to us his eternal wrath against sinners, it is a fearful wickedness to endeavour to lower and weaken the terrors of his everlasting fire.

But we are sure also in all that God does, "God is love." In proportion, indeed, to the revelation of his love through the scriptures, is the corresponding revelation of his wrath against the unbelief and wickedness that reject that love. It is not till after the deluge, and the deliverance, and following wickedness of the survivors, that Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. It is not till the rich exhibition of divine

* The noun *αιων* has, indeed, an indefinite sense of a long period, meaning generally perpetuity and eternity; but the adjective *αιωνιος* has every where in the New Testament the meaning of everlasting or eternal.

grace in the prophetical writings, and the awful apostacy of the ten tribes, that the question is put to them, "who among us shall dwell with devouring fire, who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isaiah xxxiii. 14; lxvi. 24. The Saviour, full of grace and truth, is the most explicit and repeated asserter of this most solemn and awakening truth. Mark ix. 42—48. Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 46. And the very close of the New Testament, after all the fulness of grace had been exhibited, withholds not, but most clearly and fully announces the eternal torment of the finally wicked and impenitent. Rev. xiv. 11; xix. 3; xx. 10.

What the nature of that fire may be; how it may really operate, and what the effect of that torment may be on the tormented, we know not; only we are sure "the Judge of all the earth will do right." And yet there is manifestly an evil in sin, and a stubbornness in that evil, as seen in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the rejection of that death by the sinner from love of sin, far beyond our present thoughts, and requiring all that God has revealed and purposes to do, for its effectual removal from the earth. Let the terrors, then, of the Lord persuade us. "Who knoweth," says the inspired writer, "the power of thine anger; even according to thy fear so is thy wrath." In the full belief of God's word may we "flee from the wrath to come."

CHAPTER XX.

THE COMING REGENERATION OF THE EARTH.

THE Church of Christ, believing the word of God, is universally expecting the destruction of the present earth with all its works by fire, and the making of a new heaven and a new earth. "We, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The scriptures call the great things connected with this by various names, "the planting of the heavens and the laying the foundations of the earth." Isa. li. 5, 6. "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth." Isa. lxv. 17. "The regeneration." Matt. xix. 28. "The times of the restitution of all things." Acts iii. 21. "The manifestation of the sons of God." Rom. viii. 19. "The adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. viii. 23. "The resurrection of the dead." Phil. iii. 11. "The coming of our Lord," (1 Thess. iv. 15. 2 Peter i. 16,) "and the day of the Lord." 2 Peter iii. 10. "The world to come." Heb. ii. 5.

What we purpose here to dwell upon is, THE REGENERATION OF THE EARTH in connection with baptism. It is exhibited in baptism as its shadow and earnest. Fully to understand then the ordinance of baptism, it is requisite to have scriptural views of this most important doctrine. May the Lord himself guide us into his truth concerning it, and guard us from all error, that we may know and rejoice in the blessed hope set before us in his gospel.

The term regeneration, παλιγγενεσια, is used but twice in the New Testament. In Titus iii. 5, it is used in reference to the ordinance of baptism and our new birth, though parallel terms are frequently used, especially in the writings of St. John, to describe God's imparting to us a new spiritual life, as we have seen in the chapter on Regeneration.

But our Lord has used the word παλιγγενεσια, in a larger sense, and thus leads us to connect spiritual regeneration with its completion, in the regeneration of the whole earth. He thus sets before his disciples these high hopes,—" Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Matt. xix. 28, 29.

It is obvious that regeneration may here be joined either with following Christ, or with his sitting on the throne of glory. Like the expressions, the kingdom of heaven, which may have a reference to the spiritual kingdom now, or the kingdom of glory hereafter, so regeneration may have even a designed reference to our spiritual birth now, and the fuller regeneration of which that spiritual birth is the commencement.

The opinions of the Christian fathers upon this, may illustrate it : Origen speaks at some length upon it in his Homilies on Matthew. He says, ' Those therefore who have followed the Saviour, shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and they shall receive this power at the resurrection of the dead. And this indeed is the regeneration, being a kind of new birth, when the new heavens and the new earth are built for them, and the new covenant is delivered, and its cup to those who have renewed themselves. But of this regeneration, that is the introduction which by Paul is called the laver of regeneration, and which laver of regeneration, in this renewal, the

Spirit follows with the washing of renewal. There is probably in our earth none clean from pollution, though his life be but of one day, because of the mystery of our birth, in respect of which each one born may say, what was said by David in the fifty-first Psalm, in these words—" I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." But in the regeneration by the laver, every one that is born from above of water and of the Spirit is clean from pollution,—clean, as I dare to say, in a glass and by an enigma. But in that other regeneration, " when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory," whosoever shall come to that regeneration in Christ, will be most clean from all pollution—" face to face." And he also shall obtain that regeneration through the laver of regeneration. But if you would understand that laver with the mind, see how John, baptizing with water unto repentance, speaks of the Saviour : " He will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." In regeneration therefore by the laver we are buried with Christ ; we are buried with him by baptism, according to the apostle. But in the laver of regeneration by fire and the Spirit, we are made conformable to the glorious body of Christ, sitting on the seat of his Majesty, we also sitting on twelve thrones, if only, leaving all things, in every way and especially in baptism, we have followed Christ.'

Jerome applies also the term regeneration here to the ' dead rising incorrupt from corruption, and not to spiritual regeneration.'

Augustine, in his City of God, (lib. xx. c. 5.) speaking of this passage, says, ' Whereas Christ says " in the regeneration," hereby assuredly he means to be understood the resurrection of the dead, by the name of regeneration ; for thus our flesh shall be regenerate by incorruption, as our soul is regenerate by faith.'

The regeneration yet to come applies however to a larger extent than to the resurrection of the body ; as is clear from the solemn words of Him who sits upon the throne : " And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all

things new. And he said unto me, Write, for these words are faithful and true." Let us endeavour to discern and unfold something of this redemption of all things in its various parts, shewing in each how baptism shadows it out and is the earnest of it.

We may observe redemption first with reference to God's LOWER CREATURES. The psalms and the prophetical writings are full of predictions relating to their complete deliverance from that curse which sin, at our fall, brought upon them. See especially Psalm lxxii. xcvi. xcviii. Isa. xi. xxxv. lv. lxv. Ezek. xxxiv. xxxvi. &c. Though, doubtless, such predictions have a higher spiritual meaning; yet is there no reason to exclude the change in the natural world to which they, in their first sense, relate. To the same view the apostle leads us in that remarkable passage, "The earnest expectation of the creation (κτισις) waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," for the "creation (κτισις) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation (κτισις) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation (κτισις) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Rom. viii. 19—22. In the law of Moses in the year of Jubilee every man was to return to his possession; there was to be a redemption for the land. Lev. xxv. In the sacrament of baptism we have a token of this redemption of the lower creation for the highest use of man. Water is redeemed for a holy use. It is made the standing type of the Divine Spirit. John iii. 5; vii. 38. Washing with water continually, is needful to cleanse us from all contracted filthiness, and thus points out that higher act of grace by which Jesus sanctifies and cleanses the church "by the washing of water through the word." Hence, in the baptismal service, there is the prayer, 'Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin.' Thus we are taught by one example to connect all visible and earthly things with spiritual instruction, and to turn them

to a high and heavenly use, and are trained up for that time when every thing shall be thus sanctified.

We may next observe THE REDEMPTION OF THE HUMAN BODY: its resurrection from the grave, or transformation at the coming of the Lord. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel," and this in a way far beyond our highest thoughts. The body mouldering in the dust shall not remain there for ever. The human frame, subject all our life long to innumerable infirmities, shall not continue thus for ever. In a quickly coming day, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Cor. xv. 52.

We are in that chapter told various particulars of this glorious and wonderful change. So in another place it is said, "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. iii. 20, 21. There is a manifest regeneration or redemption of the human body from its feeble, infirm, and corrupt state to a condition of inconceivable purity, glory, and blessedness. And thus in baptism the outward washing of the body is the earnest of its complete purification from sin and evil. As the leper, when found free from leprosy, was to wash his clothes and wash himself in water, that he might be clean (Lev. xiv.); so the baptismal washing is the token of our cleansing. When our Lord washed his disciples' feet, and Peter would have had him wash his whole body, he would not, because the partial cleansing typified the whole. And thus, as the consequence of our being brought to Christ, our bodies become the temples of the Holy Ghost, and we are sealed also to the day of redemption.

The redemption of THE HUMAN SOUL, from its present impure, enslaved, captive state; or at the best so conflicting with evil that "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would;"

(Gal. v. 17.) is another part of our hope. The apostle prays for the Thessalonians—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. If when he shall appear "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," (1 John iii.) what a glorious change has yet to take place in our souls; when we join "the spirits of the just made perfect." Heb. xii. Of all this glory, baptism is the figure and earnest. "Arise," says Ananias to Saul, "and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. It is, as we have seen, a seal of the grace of the Spirit. Just as Naaman, the leper, was cleansed from his leprosy by washing seven times in Jordan in virtue of the divine appointment, so Jesus has appointed baptism for cleansing our souls; he washes us from our sins in his own blood; (Rev. i. 5, 6.) we are sanctified by the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. vi. 11. What a hope then is set before us at the appearance of our Lord; and having this hope, how purifying should it be to us. 1 John iii. 3.

The redemption of the KINGLY AND PRIESTLY OFFICES is also promised, so that this shall be a part of our glory in the world to come. When the Israelites were separated for God, it was promised to them, "if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Exod. xix. 5, 6. But Israel was disobedient and unbelieving, and because of unbelief they were broken off, and thus we Gentiles were grafted into their olive-tree, that we, by faith, might attain this glory. And now we Gentile Christians can sing the song, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. v. 9, 10. The glories of this office are inexpressibly vast and weighty,

and it is a subject on which the apostle shews it is a shame to be ignorant: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world; know ye not that ye shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. It is made most plain by explicit promises. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." Dan. vii. 18. "They shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xxii. 5. Baptism is our consecration to this glorious office. When the priests of the law of Moses were set apart for their office, they were to be washed with water at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. Exod. xxix. 4. So the new-born children of God are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter ii. 5. They are now "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," verse 9. They now can sing the song, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us to be kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The redemption of HUMAN SOCIETY to perfect oneness is a farther blessing, designed by the glorious gospel of Christ. When man was first created, the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make an help meet for him;" and making the woman out of one of his ribs, God "brought her unto the man; and Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." In this was contained the wonderful mystery of the marriage of Christ to his church, and of the perfected oneness of that church for ever. For this our Lord prays, "that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." John xvii. 21. Already Christians by faith "are come to the Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven." But who can tell all the fulness and glories of the perfected union above, when "the ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" have but one voice to praise and magnify

the Lamb. Rev. v. All the glorious company is but one bride, the Lamb's wife (Rev. xix. 7); one city, the holy Jerusalem. Rev. xxi. 10. Baptism is our introduction to this society. In the beautiful language of our Liturgy, we receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock: or, in the more emphatic words of scripture, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13), ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have also put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal. iii. 26—28. Thus Christians have all "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Eph. iv. 5. They "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." Ephes. ii. 19. Oh that we did but more realize our present union, and anticipate its glories and completion for ever!

The redemption of THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD from their present debasement and alienation is also clearly predicted. At present, Satan is "the god of this world;" he works in the children of disobedience. Christians have to wrestle not merely "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephes. vi. 12. The kingdoms of this world are yet under that character of beasts, developed in Daniel, chapter vii. But it will not be so always; a day is clearly predicted when the Son of man shall come "with the clouds of heaven;" and it is foretold, "There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Dan. vii. 14. At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, "there were great voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xi. 15. Then the

kings of the earth shall come to Christ without exception, and bring their honour to him. Rev. xxi. 24. "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him." Psalm lxxii. 11. Baptism is the anticipation, earnest, and first-fruits of this glory. It is joined with the solemn commission, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them." That commission places Christ at the head of all dominion: "All power in heaven and earth is given to me," and it calls all men to an entire surrender of themselves to his will;—"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The baptismal blessings are first-fruits of this day of blessedness. We are baptized into his death, and risen with him through faith to a heavenly life on earth; "we are married" already in God's purpose "to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Rom. vii. 4. And as the Saviour's sufferings prepared the way for the promise to him, "so shall he sprinkle many nations:" thus is our baptism, in all its parts, preparing the way for the regeneration of the kingdoms of the world to Christ.

Once more, lastly and most of all important, there is yet to come, THE REDEMPTION OF GOD'S NAME from all that dishonour that has been put upon it. By the people called by his name, whether Jews or Christians, and by all the abominations of infidelity, lawlessness, secularity, and superstition, as well as by open idolatry, God's name has for 6000 years been profaned in our world. Yet the first petition which our Lord taught us to offer up was; "Hallowed be thy name." It is assigned as the great reason for returning mercy to the Jews; most humbling indeed, but most comforting to the contrite heart. "When they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's

sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen whither ye went; and I will sanctify my great name which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them, and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." Ezek. xxxvi. 20—24; see also xx. 9—14. And as the Jews will thus give God glory (Psalm xxii. 23), so all nations "shall come and glorify his name." Psalm lxxxvi. 9. In the descent of the holy Jerusalem "out of heaven from God," its first feature is "having the glory of God." Rev. xxi. 10, 11. "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof," and then we are told, "the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it" (Rev. xxi. 23, 24), and his servants shall "see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." Rev. xxii. 4. To have our heavenly Father truly glorified by all creation, to have his perfect law of love in every heart, and his will done on earth as it is in heaven; nothing less than this is included in the regeneration and the making of all things new. Rev. xxi. 1—5. And baptism is the shadow, earnest, and foretaste of this. For this we are "baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" that we may now, ourselves immersed in the divine grace, love, and communion, bear the sacred name of Christian before the world, and like our Master, Christ, "glorify God's name on earth." Thus, Christians, while the true Sun of Righteousness is unseen, let us, like the moon, the lesser light of the heavens, shine with reflected beams in the midst of the present darkness of a benighted world. O did we walk worthy of our high calling, how much might even now be done to redeem God's name from dishonour; but he will effectually glorify his great name in that speedily-coming day, when "the whole earth shall be filled with his glory."

What remains then, Christian reader, but that having these higher views of this sacred ordinance, you should rise by it to brighter hopes than you have ever yet had of its mysterious fulness of blessedness and glory. See into what

privileges you have been baptized. And oh let us seek to walk more worthy of our high and heavenly calling. Observe the enlarging of God's purposes of love to his people from the beginning, and contemplate much that heavenly kingdom, in its full glories, to which you have been introduced.

CHAPTER XXI.

ADDRESS TO VARIOUS CLASSES TO RECAL THEM TO BAPTISMAL PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES.

You bear, my fellow Christians, two names; a surname connected with your natural parents, and a Christian name marking your connection with your heavenly parent, and reminding you of the unspeakably great privileges and blessings which he designs for all who come to him.

Think then of the glories of this great name, your Christian name. Whatever that name may be, its value is unspeakably great, as a link of connection with Christ. How much in this world is made of the various distinctions in society. The titles of earthly honours are precious in the eyes of those who possess them. To be the owners of large estates, to be members or peers of parliament, to have appended to their names, knight or baronet, lord or duke, prince or king, is enough to attract the honour and reverence of men. These are figures and shadows of greater and better things promised in the gospel; and if those higher dignities be not sought and gained in this day of grace, the shadows will for ever vanish away, and leave nothing to their former possessors except "shame and everlasting contempt."

But connected with the Christian name to every truly baptized believer, who has faith in God's promises and who has the Holy Ghost, the earnest of his inheritance, there are not transient and fading, but eternal and truly glorious titles and honours, which should call forth constant faith,

and then glad thanksgivings. To be the son of the Most High, what a title is this! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath thus bestowed upon us!" To be "an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ," of an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away," what riches are here! To have the reality now in spirit of "a royal priesthood," and the assurance of Him who has thus made us to our God kings and priests, that "we shall reign on the earth." Rev. v. 10. What glories are here! These are connected with the Christian name: where that name is made a reality by faith in the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is unspeakably important for us to discern these our rich privileges, both for our happiness and our usefulness. Unless I see that I am raised together with Christ, and am with him in spirit seated in heavenly places, I have no animating motives to seek those things which are above, and to labour like Christ for the good of all below. Discern then, Christian reader, most distinctly your heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus, know they are yours by faith in him, and, if you believe it not, mightily cry out in prayer to God, who is far more ready to give than you to ask, till you obtain this precious faith. Be assured God gives no commands to which he does not annex blessings. When he called you to be baptized, he did in effect, say, "I will baptize you with the Spirit. Do your part in obedience, and all my promises are yours." Believe this his love.

Then you have indeed strength for being a blessing. If you know that you are "the elect of God, holy, and beloved," you may, as your rich privilege and constant duty, "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." God's end in blessing us is that we may be the channel of blessing to others, and so receive continually larger and fuller blessings.

Baptism is God's ordinance for assuring to us these rich

privileges, and though this be plainly and repeatedly stated in the word of God (Rom. xi. 3—5. Gal. iii. 26—29. Col. ii. 11—14), it has, through unbelief on the one hand, and a resting in the outward forms on the other, lost very much of its designed end to help and strengthen our daily faith.

Let me then, in the close of this treatise, address my various readers with affectionate earnestness on this great subject.

We, my brethren and FELLOW-MINISTERS in the gospel, are most directly concerned in this. We have the administration of baptism, and in the Church of England we have many special advantages in a scriptural form, which has now been in use for nearly three hundred years, and indeed the larger part for probably twelve hundred years; proceeding entirely on those great principles of faith in God's promises, which are the very root of Christian excellence and blessedness. I feel assured that deep scriptural knowledge shews us that we want not an alteration of our liturgy, but we do want the raising of faith in ministers and worshippers, and the carrying out of the directions of our church by the congregations which form our subsisting church. Much may be done by us in this matter, in having public baptisms, at stated seasons, in preaching on this ordinance, as well as on that of the Lord's Supper; and by intercourse beforehand and afterwards with those baptized. Let us, in the general strain of our ministry, often shew our congregations both their baptismal privileges and their baptismal responsibility and consistency, as to a holy and heavenly life. Baptism, duly improved in the ministry, is a powerful instrument of spiritual good to our people.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS, most deeply are you concerned in this. There is a far fuller joy to be had in your children, than any springing merely from the social and domestic circle, from the quickness of their understanding, their rapid progress in gaining knowledge, the tenderness of their affections, their delighting in you, and their mutual love to each other; plenteous, and constant, and full of

blessedness, as are these streams of joy. The highest spring of joy, and the fullest river of pleasure, is in their blessedness. "I have no greater joy," says an inspired writer, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." 3 John 4. Now one great means of this is to realize God's promises to your children; of which the Bible is so full, and which were sealed to you and to them in baptism; and to bring them up with a constant faith in those promises, constantly reminding them of the goodness and loving-kindness of God our Father, thus gracious to us, and of the happiness of being like him partakers of his divine nature, and of his holy love to others. Baptism, thus used, becomes the help of all Christian instruction; and its continual recurrence in public worship, furnishes many an opportunity of leading your children onwards in the divine life.

GODFATHERS AND GODMOTHERS, remember how important the general duty upon all Christians is "to exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;" and what advantages this early engagement had given you for fulfilling this duty. It was a truly kind and gracious office which you undertook in their behalf, at the request of their dearest earthly friends, in the most helpless period of their life. That kindness should now be carried out, and not rest in the mere outward public engagement. It should influence you to think of and labour for them, in the prayers of the closet, in the instructions of Christian wisdom, in the faithful admonitions of Christian love, and where you have the means, by such gifts of pious books, or such letters of true faithfulness and experience, as may lead the minds of these your spiritually-adopted children, to know the great privileges of the gospel, and, by living faith in Jesus, and watchfulness against their many snares, to realize them.

But there are THOSE WHO NEGLECT INFANT BAPTISM. While I rejoice in the thought that the consistent piety and real devotedness to God our Saviour, of many who

reject Infant Baptism, entitle them to brotherly esteem and cordial affection, their unscriptural error on this point is connected with many serious evils, and I would venture to address them upon these evils. They think that they are giving a decided proof of deadness to the world and devotedness to Christ, by the very act in which they run counter to His gracious institution. Differing in this from so large a proportion of their brethren, their time, and thought, and strength are necessarily, for self-defence, given to an outward ordinance, and, in our view, given to what He has not required, instead of being given to advance His kingdom and glory ; and thus unprofitable disputes have occupied and distracted the minds and talents of the true followers of Christ. They reject those infants from the church, whom Christ admits into his kingdom. They shut out of the Christian church those who were admitted into the Jewish. They weaken the grand help to faith in God's promises of grace to our children which the covenant of his love has assured to them. Children are deprived of God's appointed seals to his covenant, and thus of many helps to their faith. Were their principles universal, the national profession of religion would soon be lost. Many are by them baptized a second time, contrary to the great character of this ordinance, and with solemn mockery of what we doubt not, before God, was his own ordinance, in their first baptism. When we remember, too, the analogy of baptism and circumcision, and God's solemn declaration respecting circumcision, " the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant," (Gen. xvii. 14) ; and the parallel declaration respecting baptism, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John iii. 5), we may see that there is no slight danger in wilfully neglecting an appointed ordinance of God, designed for a special end—admission into his church ; and which, observed in faith and prayer, must obtain real blessings. Let me entreat

you to study well the word of God on this subject. Do not readily yield to plausible objections, which have carried away, in their first powerful impression, many a devoted servant of Christ, and so fixed him in his devious path, that he could not afterwards be recovered.*

* Mr. Scott's exampls on this point is worthy of attention ;—" When I published the Force of Truth, I had never attended to any controversies concerning chnrch government, or any kindred subjects. I found myself a minister of the establishment, and as I saw no sufficient reason to relinqnish my station, I was satisfied that it was my duty to retain it. But soon after, the controversy concerning baptism, whethsr it shonld be administered to infants, or only to adults professing faith, fell in my way, and for some time I was almost ready to conclude that the Antipædo-Baptists were right. This gave me great uneasiness ; not because I was solicitous whether in the searcb after truth I were led among them or elsewhere, but because I feared being misled, and deprecated following my publication witb a further and *needless* change, whicb might bring discredit upon it. Many, very many prayers, accompanied with tears, did I pour out upon this subject. I read books on both sides of the question, but received no satisfaction. I became afraid even of administering baptism or the Lord's Supper. But I said to mysslf, *He that believeth shall not make haste.* I must retain my station till I bave taken tims to examine the subject fully: and I must in tbe mean time do what retaining that station requires.... At length, I laid aside all controversial writings, and determined to seek satisfaction on tbis question as I had on others, by searching the scriptures and by prayer. I was no less time than three quarters of a year engaged in this investigation, before I came to a conclusion ; but I was tben so fully satisfied that tbe infant cbildren of believers, and of all who make a credible profession of faith, are the proper subjects of baptism, that I have never since been much troubled abont it.

" This was my conclusion, especially from the identity of the covenant made with Abraham, and that still made with believers : and from circumcision being ths sacrament of regeneration under tbe old dispensation, as baptism is under the new, and the seal of the righteousness of faith. Abraham received this seal long after he believed ; Isaac when an infant ; Ishmael when thirteen years of age. The men of Abraham's household, and Esau, though uninterested in the promises concerning Canaan, yet as a part of Abraham's family and of the visible church, were circumcised by the command of God bimself. The circumcision of infants was enjoined, with denunciations of wrath against tbose who neglected it. The apostles were Israelites, accustomed to tbis system. Adult Gentiles were admitted among the Jews by circumcision, and their male children were circumcised also. In Christ there is neither male nor female. Had only adults been designed to be the subjects of Christian baptism, some prohibition of admitting infants would have been requisite, and we should never have read, as we do, of *households* bsing baptized without any limitation or exception of this kind being intimated. In short, unless it can be proved that circumcision was not tbs sign or sacrament of regsneration, even as baptism now is, I cannot see how the argument can be answered ; and all the common objections against infant baptism, as administered to suhjects incapable of the professions required, and the benefits intsnded, bear witb equal forcs against infant circumcision.

" The conclusion thus drawn rests not on tbis ground alone ; collateral proof was not and is not overlooked ; but my idea always was, that not the *privilege* of the infant, but the *duty* of the parent, is the grand tbing to be ascertained, and this clears away mucb extraneous matter from the argument.

" To the question of immersion, or sprinkling, or pouring, I never attached any great importance. Immersion is doubtless baptism ; and so is sprinkling

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS BAPTIZED. You are personally concerned in all that has been said. For your everlasting welfare, God and his church have had all these thoughts of love and promises of grace, which are a solemn trust, in the faithful use of which you will attain heavenly riches and glory. As to the circumcised Israelites belonged "the oracles of God, the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," so to baptized members of the church belong all the privileges of the gospel. But they are to be realized by your own faith, to be enjoyed by your own love, to be anticipated, as far as they are yet to come, by your own hope. You have then a great duty, as well as a great privilege, set before you. And the privilege is the strength for the duty; "the joy of the Lord is your strength." Arise then, and be diligent. "Search the scriptures. Pray always. Watch ye. Stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men. Be strong. Let all be done with charity." These and innumerable stirring and quickening directions, are furnished you in that precious directory of your life, God's holy word. O cleanse your way, by taking heed to that word. Prize the scriptures, as the very charter of your highest inheritance and glory; and walk in the way there marked out, for your attaining and becoming meet for that inheritance and glory.

THOSE WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION are a large class, and the diligent improvement of the means of grace may help to dispel their doubts, and give them all the joy, holiness, and strength of the full assurance of hope.

The immense importance of MAKING SURE OUR CALLING TO LIFE EVERLASTING, should be deeply impressed on all our hearts. Our personal assurance of salvation depends on our diligence in the use of means. How the apostle Paul felt it! (1 Cor. ix. 27.) How the apostle Peter urges

or pouring, according to my unvaried judgment. If a few texts seem to allude to baptism by figures taken from immersion, how many speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit under the idea of pouring out upon us."—See Scott's Life, p. 164—167.

it! (2 Peter i. 10.) God does all this on his part (Isaiah v. 4.) with us as he did with the Jews. He places us in his church, he gives us the name of his children and his elect; he sets before us his richest privileges; we have in baptism the sign, and means, and pledge of them; and yet we may, through unbelief and love of sin, trample upon all, and despise all. As Israel was a chosen nation, and yet they were "not all Israel that were of Israel," (Rom. ix. 5, 6), so is there an election to salvation (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14,) within an election to outward privileges; an election beloved for the fathers' sake, yet enemies concerning the gospel. Rom. xi. 28. The remnant according to the election of grace obtained the blessing (Rom. xi. 7), while the election that was beloved merely for the father's sake (ver. 28), were blinded; though even of them, such is the fulness of God's love, ultimately shall spring a seed, that the promise may be realized, "All Israel shall be saved."*

We cannot comprehend the mystery, yet we are sure, that if we perish, the fault is wholly in ourselves, and that if we will come to Christ he will receive and welcome us. Yes, and if we ask him, he will give us the will, "of his good pleasure, working in us to will and to do, that we may work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." Let us "lay hold then of eternal life," let us attain those "things that accompany salvation," that we may obtain the sweet assurance that we are not only chosen to outward privileges, but "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." See God's first love to you in your baptism, and the ground of that love laid so firmly in the gift unto death of his own Son for your salvation, and be not content with anything less than knowing that you are passed from death to life; and the Spirit's bearing witness with your spirit of your adoption into God's family.

WORLDLY PROFESSORS AND NON-COMMUNICANTS. O how

* See Romans xi. throughout. Mr. Scott has abundantly met the objections to the doctrine of personal election to salvation, in his answer to Bishop Tomline's professed Refutation of Calvinism.

great also is the number of the baptized whom such a description now includes. The christenings in London and its neighbourhood are above 26,000 each year; but is the average increase of fresh communicants in all the churches put together a tenth part of that number! Is there any proportion in country parishes between the baptisms and the new communicants? or do a seventh part of the baptized attend the Lord's table? Indeed, in our great towns by far the larger proportion, it is to be feared, do not attend public worship at all; and of those who do attend, what vast crowds turn aside from the communion-table! But where can be the consistency of going to one sacrament, and calling yourselves Christians, and never going to the other sacrament? Where is the wisdom of thus halting between two opinions? If you do not intend to renounce Christianity altogether, and avow infidelity, why do you not go on to keep your baptismal vows, and walk in all the commandments of the Lord? Think you that if there is a solemn engagement to live to the Lord at the sacramental table, there is not also at the sacramental font? One is equally a privilege, and a responsibility, and an engagement with the other. The violation of the vows of one shuts you as much out of Christian blessings as the violation of the vows of the other. Do not deceive yourselves. No human being can screen himself by subterfuges from the Almighty, nor by human policy escape his infinite wisdom and searching eye. There is, there can be, no safety for a moment; no real happiness at all but in the light of God's favour, and grace, and love, connected with an entire surrender of ourselves to him. But in that is peace and love, joy and holiness; blessedness here and blessedness for ever. Why, why will you die? Worldliness is disease and death; alienation from God is disease and death. Think of the provisions of his love for you! What more could he have done in your behalf, than to give even his own Son to die for you; his own Spirit to teach you; his own word to be a light to you; his own divinely-appointed baptism in your early years to bring you into

his church? And shall all this be in vain, because you are so besotted with the love of sin, your real and worst enemy, that you will credit any thing, any foolish imagination of your vain heart, rather than believe God's real love to you, and walk in the ways that his infinite wisdom has marked out?

The unbelief of the church in God's promises to the baptized, has been carried out in a corresponding and increasing unbelief in their education; just as it is the property of one sin to beget many similar sins, and the consequent inconsistency of the baptized has reacted in evil, weakening the faith of the church in baptismal blessings, till we are brought to that awful state of mere nominal Christianity, which now palsies the whole professing church, and makes our beautiful baptismal service almost a dead letter, and the grand stumbling-block of the whole body of Dissenters. Oh, were faith but in exercise in ministers and people, in parents, and sponsors, and worshippers, what a spiritual energy would accompany our baptismal services, till we attained the blessed prospect held forth by my beloved friend, Mr. Budd, of infant baptism being the means of national reformation. For this let us labour and pray, and the Lord at his coming will own his work of love, and fully accomplish our highest hopes in a regenerated world.

I call, then, on all the baptized of every class, testifying to them that God would have them to enjoy their full privileges as members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. They are bound by the strongest obligations of duty, self-interest, the good of others, and their own everlasting blessedness, to realize these blessings of God's love by faith, and to act consistently with them in the holy and happy walk of a Christian life. "All things are ready." The day of grace is waning to its close; the season of judgment is at hand; the world is shaking previous to its last convulsion; every thing else is failing; every other hope is groundless—now, then, fly to your true refuge and strength, and be hid in

the day of God's wrath, and be prepared for his kingdom and glory.

I close with addressing ALL THAT ARE BAPTIZED. Walk worthy of your high calling. Think of the apostle's statement, " As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." This is your glorious privilege. You may and should believe that God looks at you through this ordinance, as if he saw only Christ. In this day of grace, even sinners are spared from day to day, and blessed with innumerable blessings. You are called to consider yourselves Christians, as " one in Christ Jesus," (Gal. iii. 27, 28.) and to regard yourselves as but one person, as if He and you were but one being ; clothed with his righteousness, you may go to your God with all filial freedom and joyful confidence ; you may have " access with boldness to the holiest through his blood." He looks upon you, believing in Jesus, as he does upon his very son Christ Jesus. Realise this blessed truth by faith, and live in the light of it. There is a double putting on of Christ. Gal. iii. 27, 28. Rom. xiii. 12, 14. Not only put on Christ by baptism, which is God's first act of grace and love, shewing his willingness for your salvation ; but " put on Christ " by daily faith and love, by constant imitation and conformity. Thus the apostle charges baptized Christians,—" Put on the armour of light ; walk honestly as in the day ; put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." Rom. xiii. 12—14. Meditate much on his mind and converse, on his life and sufferings, on his meekness and humility, on his love and patience, his spirit of prayer and devotedness to his Father's will, and see your high calling and your glorious pattern, and be followers of him. O let Christ and none else be your model ! When they were baptized in the early church, they had white garments put upon them to denote their intention thenceforward to maintain a life of unspotted purity ; with a charge of this kind, " Receive this white and immaculate garment, and bring it forth without spot before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus

Christ." They were considered as engaged to that strict and holy life which Jesus had left us by his doctrine and example.*

What a world would ours be if thus filled with Christ-like followers of our divine Redeemer! What victories would the gospel continually gain! Christian reader, seek to add first yourself and then others to this happy number of the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, thus shewing forth the virtues (τας αρετας) "of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

Once more, LET THE BAPTIZED BE FULL OF LOVE TO THE BAPTIZED. The name of the Trinity has by his ministers sounded over us all: and been put upon us all, (Numb. vi. 27,) and the fulness of that name is love. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. God is love, and he—he only—that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." 1 John iv. 7, 8, 16. Our baptism should make us one, and not divide us; and it will do this when we rise through the outward form to the inward life and glory. This they did in the primitive church; we no sooner read of their being baptized, than we read of their having "all things common, and eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." We are "by one Spirit all baptized into one body;" let us think of each as fellow-members of that body. To this the apostle often and fully exhorts us, that "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." May we feel "that we are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

It is our losing this true Christian standing that gives occasion to all the false imitations of it by which Satan deludes men in unholy unions and infidel conspiracies, full

* See Cave's Primitive Christianity.

of pretended love, but all based on selfishness. Our fellow men are mocked by the great enemy with the delusive phantom of that reality which the gospel of Christ alone can give. But Christians, by their inconsistencies, have given this enemy all his advantages for this delusion. Let us now, in the evil times in which we live, dispel Satan's delusions by the fulness of Christ's love.

May we, then, attaining the reality more and more, make every artificial imitation needless and worthless, by the bright shining of the full light of true Christian love, and so shall we truly become " the light of the world.

APPENDIX.

A LIST OF THE CHIEF BOOKS THAT HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED ON BAPTISM.

This List is added in the hope that it may be convenient to some readers to have such a reference as will enable them at any time to study farther this interesting subject. The books are arranged chronologically; except where those on particular controversies are mentioned together. It doubtless might have been much enlarged.

The subject of baptism has been from time to time considered by the Christian Fathers. Tertullian has a Treatise on it. Cyprian wrote on the Rebaptizing of Heretics. Cyril's Catechetical Lectures to Candidates for Baptism have just been translated into English, and published at Oxford. There is a Treatise on the Sacraments attributed to Ambrose, and another on Baptism by Mark about A.D. 395. Basil has Homilies upon it. Augustine has three Treatises on Baptism. Chrysostom has two Discourses on Baptism. The Fathers often give their views of it in their general writings. There is a considerable collection of the Testimonies of the Fathers in favour of the Protestant Doctrine at the end of the Corpus Confessionum Fidei.

The Reformers Luther and Calvin, Zuingle and Œcolampadius, were by the Anabaptists compelled to notice Baptism. Bullinger, Philpot, and Frith also wrote on Infant Baptism: and Bishop Jewell on the Sacraments.

Cassander, Hottinger, Vossius, and many other foreigners, have published Treatises upon it.

English writers have considered it very fully, as the following list will shew.

Attersol (Wm.) A Treatise of the Sacraments. 4to. 1614.

Dennison (John). On the Two Sacraments. 4to. 1621.

Burgess (Cornelius). On Baptismal Regeneration. 4to. 1629.
See the remarks on this in this work.

Rogers (Daniel). Treatise of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. 1636.

BARBER (Edw.) Treatise of Baptism or Dipping. Fol. 1641.

WYNELL (Thomas). Covenant of Free Grace pleading the Divine Right of Christian Infants. 4to. 1642.

BLACKWOOD (Thomas). The Storming of Antichrist in his Garrison of Infant Baptism. 1644.

THE VANITY OF CHILDISH Baptism. 1644.

The numbers of writers for and against infant baptism were greatly multiplied from this time. Some of those for infant baptism were as follows:—Cooke, Marshall, Stalham, Fage, Phillips, Ram, Bakewell, Church, Cotton, Geree, Cobbett, Moore, Goodwin, Wills, Whiston, Walker, Collinges, Hickes, Towerson, Petto, Keith, Turner, Bennett, Dorrington, Williams, Pirie, Bostwick, Perronet, Towgood, Tyerman. Some of those against infant baptism were as follows:—Cornwell, Rees, Blackwood, Hobson, Tombes, Hussey, Punch, Ives, Danvers, Grantham, Gale, Penn, Jenkins, Martin, Kennett, Toulmin, Birt, Gill. There have also been several histories of the Baptists, by Crosby, Ivimey, Cox, and Hoby.

MARSHALL (Stephen). Defence of Infant Baptism. 4to. 1646.

GEREE (John). Vindication of Infant Baptism, in a full Answer to Mr. Tombes. 4to. 1646.

This writer dwells on the scriptural evidence.

GARNER (Robert). A Treatise on Baptism. 4to. 1645; 8vo. 1701.

HOMES (Nathaniel). Animadversions on Mr. Tombes. 1646.

LAURENCE (Henry). Treatise of Baptism. 4to. 1649.

COTTON (John). Grounds and Ends of the Baptism of the Children of the Faithful. 4to. 1647.

Comprehensive.

FEATLEY (Daniel). The Dippers Dipt. 4to. 1647.

Sarcastic.

HOOKER (Thomas). The Covenant of Grace opened, and Infant Baptism Proved. 4to. 1649.

HAMMONN (Henry). Baptism of Infants Defended. 8vo. 1650.

HALL (Thomas). The Font Guarded. Fol. 1657.

TAYLOR (Jer. Bishop). Discourse on Baptism. 4to. 1652.

Eloquent and pious, but with the author's peculiarities.

BAXTER (Richard). Plain Scripture Proof of Infants' Church Membership. 4to. 1653-6.

A full discussion with the author's comprehensiveness of thought.

TOMBES (John). Antipædobaptism, in 3 parts, 4to. 1652-7.

FULLER (Thomas). The Infant's Advocate. 8vo. 1653.

COBBETT (Thomas). Vindication of Children's Right to Baptism. 4to. 1654.

FORD (Simon). A Dialogue on the Practical Use of Infant Baptism. 4to. 1654.

Many useful Thoughts.

SIDENHAM (Cuthbert). A Christian Exercitation on Infant Baptism. 12mo. 1657.

CARTER (William). The Covenant of God with Abraham opened. 4to. 1657.

BRINSLEY (John). On Infant Baptism. 1658.

WALKER (William). A Plea for Infant Baptism. 8vo. 1677.

HEYWOOD (O.) Baptismal Bonds Renewed. 12mo. 1687.

TOWERSON (Gabriel). Of the Sacrament of Baptism, and of the Church Catechism. 8vo. 1687.

PRIMITIVE BAPTISM, and therein Infants' and Parents' Right. 8vo. 1690.

Recommended by Mr. Sylvester.

ASSHETON (William). Conference with an Anabaptist. 12mo. 1695.

Conclusive and satisfactory as to the controversy.

BURKITT (William). Discourse on Infant Baptism. 8vo. 1695.

LESLIE (Charles). The Divine Institution of Water Baptism, in Answer to the Quakers. 4to. 1697.

GILPIN (Richard). A Discourse on Infant Baptism. 8vo. 1698. By the Author of the Treatise on Satan's Temptation.

Many useful thoughts in it. It is a scarce tract, without his name.

KEITH (George). The Arguments of the Quakers against Baptism Refuted. 4to. 1698.

PATRICK (Bishop). Aqua Genitalis. 8vo. 1702.

WALL)William). The History of Infant Baptism.

A truly valuable and comprehensive work, with full testimonies from the Fathers. Many editions. 1705. 4 vols. 8vo. 1836. Oxford.

GALE (John). Reflections on Mr. Wall's History. 8vo. 1711.

HITCHIN (Edward). The Infant's Cause Pleaded, or the Concurrent Harmony of all parts of Holy Scripture for their Baptism. 12mo. 1706.

Remarkable for the fulness of the scripture testimony.

BRADFORD)Bishop) A Discourse concerning Baptismal and Spiritual Regeneration. 12mo. 1709.

WHISTON (William). The Doctrine and Practice of the two first Centuries. 8vo. 1712.

BINGHAM (Joseph). History of the Practice of the Church on Lay Baptism. 2 vol. 8vo. 1712.

Mr. Brett replied to part of this, 8vo. 1714.

WARDEN (John). A Practical Essay on Baptism. Edinburgh. 3vo. 1724.

This answers to the title.

NASMITH (Robert). A Treatise on the Entail of the Covenant of Grace. 12mo. 1725.

Much valuable scriptural truth in this work.

FOOT (WILLIAM). A Practical Discourse concerning Baptism. 12mo. 1729.

A useful work.

WATERLAND (DANIEL). The Nature, Obligation, and Efficacy of the Christian Sacraments considered. 8vo. 1730.

BRADBURY (Thomas). Duty and Doctrine of Baptism. 8vo. 1749.

GILL (John). Anti-pædo Baptism maintained, 8vo. 1753.

ADDINGTON (Stephen). The Christian Minister's Reasons for Baptizing Infants. 12mo. 1771.

Sensible and practical.

HENRY (Matthew). A Treatise on Baptism. 12mo. 1783.

This is an abridgment of a larger work in manuscript. I fear the original manuscript has been lost. It is written in the excellent spirit of the author.

WILLIAMS (Dr.) On Baptism. 2 vols. 1789.

An able work in favour of infant baptism.

ROBINSON (Robert). The History of Baptism. 4to. 1790.

EDWARDS (Peter). Candid Reasons for Renouncing Anti-pædo-Baptism. 8vo. 1795.

KINGHORN (Joseph). Defence of Infant Baptism its best Confutation. 12mo. 1795.

A reply to Peter Edwards.

OSGOOD (David). Validity of Sprinkling and Right of Infants. 12mo. 1804.

An able work.

YARDLEY (Edward). A Practical Exposition on the Offices of Baptism. 12mo. 1810.

POSTLETHWAITE (Richard). The Doctrine of Baptism Vindicated. 12mo. 1811.

An excellent little work, justifying the church services.

HALL (Robert). On terms of Communion. 8vo. On the Difference between Christian and John's Baptism. 1815.

This led to a controversy with Mr. Kinghorn, who maintained close, not open, communion.

BOWDEN (James). Family Conversations on Baptism. 12mo. 1815.

Much useful information in these dialogues.

MANT (Bishop). Two Tracts on Regeneration and Conversion. 12mo. 1815.

These tracts gave rise to a long controversy, in which T. T. Biddulph, G. Bugg, G. Nicholson, J. W. Cunningham, John Scott, C. Simeon, Bishop Laurence, Bishop Bethel, Bishop Marsh, Bishop Wilson, Archdeacons Daubeny and Pott, H. Gauntlett, C. Jerram, Morgan, G. Wilford, J. Napleton, H. Gipps, Melville Horne, and many others were engaged.

TAYLOR (C.) Facts and Evidences on the Subject of Baptism. 8vo. 1818.

Mr. Taylor endeavours to prove that ponring water on those to be baptized was the original plan.

THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM by Agnostos. 1819.

Written to recommend baptism to he used only for converts from other religions to Christianity.

EWING (Greville). An Essay on Baptism. 12mo. 1824.

WARDLAW (R.) Authority, Nature, and Uses of Infant Baptism. 8vo. 1825.

JERRAM (Charles). Conversations on Baptism. 12mo. 1826.

A valuable work.

RYLAND (Dr. John). A Candid Statement of the Reasons why Baptists differ. 8vo. 1827.

Written in an excellent spirit.

IRVING (Edward). On the Sacrament of Baptism. 12mo. 1827.

BUDD (Henry). Infant Baptism the means of National Reformation. 1827. Third Edition. 1841.

A truly profitable work.

BOOTH (Abraham). Pædo Baptism examined. 3 vols. 8vo. 1829.

DAVYS (Bishop). Village Conversations on the Office of Baptism. 12mo. 1830.

A useful tract.

CARSON (Alexander). Baptism in its Mode and Subjects. 8vo. 1844.

See the Remarks page 29, &c.

FALLOW (T. M.) The order of Baptism Illustrated from the "Use of Salisbury," &c. 12mo. 1838.

A convenient work for reference.

MAURICE (F.) The Kingdom of Christ. 3 vols. 12mo. 1842.

A very able answer to the scruples of the Quakers, and an original survey of various subjects controverted among Christians.

PUSEY (E. B.) Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism. 2nd edition. 8vo. 1839.

It will be seen in the preceding work that the author does not concur in some material points with Dr. Pusey.

BUDD (Henry). Helps for the Young; or, Baptismal Regeneration according to the Services of the Established Church. 2 vols. 12mo.

Much very valuable instruction to help parents in giving a Christian education.

KNIGHT (W. B.) Letter on Infant Baptism. 12mo. 1831.

STUART (Moses). The mode of Christian Baptism, prescribed in the New Testament. *Andover, U. S.* 8vo. 1833.

POND (Enoch). A Treatise on Christian Baptism in four parts relating to the mode of Baptism; the subjects; the infants, origin and uses of infant Baptism; and to close communion. *Boston, U. S.* 8vo, 1833.

Much learned discussion in a small compass and in a Christian spirit.

BURGESS (Archibald). Baptism considered in relation to its mode and subjects. *Boston, U. S.* 12mo. 1837.

FABER (G. S.) The Primitive Doctrine of Regeneration. 8vo. 1840.

A very useful work.

A SPONSOR'S GIFT, in a series of letters to an absent child. 12mo.

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